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WRITER'S DIGEST

V. 3 no. 12 C1

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$100 in Cash Prizes

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The WRITER'S DIGEST Song Writing Contest

20 CENTS

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THE WRITER'S DIGEST

A Monthly Magazine for Writers of Photoplays, Short Stories, Poems, Songs, Etc.

T. C. O'DONNELL, EDITOR

VOLUME III. NOVEMBER, 1923. NUMBER 12.

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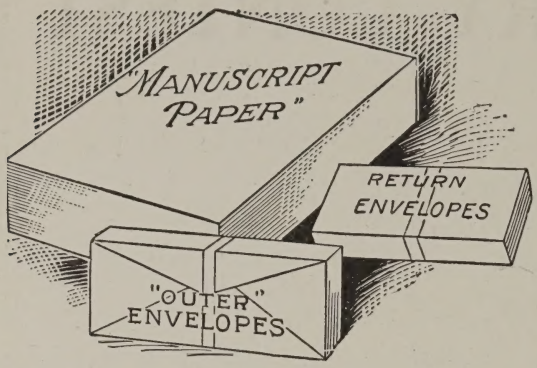

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Compiled by W. R. KANE

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Announcing the Prize Winners in the Authors' Typing & Revising Bureau's

SHORT STORY CONTEST

The contest, in which we offered three prizes—$50.00, $30.00, and $20.00—closed at 5:00 P. M., October 1st.

After careful reading and selection, the following stories were chosen as the best three among the several hundred submitted:

First Prize: "THE WEIGHTIER MATTER," by Fonetta Flansburg, Colorado Springs, Colo. An exceptionally well-written "character" story.

Second Prize: "SACRIFICIAL RATS," by Dorothy Sparrow, Peekskill, N. Y. A "psychological" story, told in original and artistic style.

Third Prize: "THE YOUNG DAREDEVIL," by Annabelle Urban, Detroit, Mich. A "juvenile" story with a well-concealed moral and an honest-to-goodness thrill.

NOW --- A MONTHLY CONTEST!

So much interest in our service was created by the contest just closed, that we have decided to award FOUR PRIZES EACH MONTH for the best

Short Story **Informative Article**
Photoplay Synopsis **Poem**

submitted during the month. The awards will be as follows:
For the best short-story, $20.00. For the best photoplay synopsis, $15.00. For the best informative article, $10.00. For the best poem, $5.00.

TERMS OF THE CONTEST:

1. Each MONTHLY CONTEST closes at 5:00 P. M. on the last day of each month. The contest is open to anyone, residing anywhere, except officers or employes connected with this Bureau. All manuscripts will be returned at the close of each contest. We are not purchasing any of the manuscripts, and retain no right or claim to them, whether or not a prize is awarded.

2. There are no restrictions in regard to length, theme or treatment; all stories must be original, never published, or produced on the screen.

3. Manuscripts should be folded (not rolled), enclosed in a large envelope and addressed to "Monthly Contest Editor, Authors' Typing and Revising Bureau, Drawer F, Tallapoosa, Ga."

4. Contestants are asked to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of their manuscripts. The manuscripts will be held in our office from one to thirty days, depending on the day of the month received.

5. All manuscripts must be TYPEWRITTEN on plain white paper, size 8½ x 11, with black record ribbon, on one side of the sheet only. Each sheet must be numbered, and bear the name and address of the author, in the upper left-hand corner.

6. Under no circumstances will we revise a manuscript which has been submitted for the Monthly Contest, for obvious reasons. It is permissible, however, to offer manuscripts which have been previously revised in the regular course of our business.

7. The names of prize winners (with their permission, of course) will be announced each month in the Writer's Digest.

ABOUT OUR SERVICE.

The Authors' Typing and Revising Bureau was established five years ago, and has enjoyed a steady and consistent growth. Writers have been quick to realize that our Detailed Criticisms are really worthwhile, our Editorial Revision a potent selling factor, and our typing as clear, legible and free from typographical errors as the story would appear when printed on the pages of a magazine.

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ANNOUNCING
Prize Song Contest

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THE WRITER'S DIGEST

By the terms of this Contest three cash prizes will be offered for songs submitted by February 20th, as follows:

For the Best Song.....$50.00
For the Second Best Song..... 30.00
For the Third Best Song..... 20.00

Three judges have consented to serve in this contest, as follows:

WILLIAM MORGAN KNOX, first violinist, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and popular song writer.

JOHN WELLINGTON LA RUE, Literary Editor, *Cincinnati Enquirer*.

FRED SMITH, Studio Director, Broadcasting Station WLW, and author of "Steerin' for Erin."

Arrangements have been completed with a nationally known music publishing house whereby the latter will accept for publication the song winning first prize, exploiting it through all the regular trade channels on the basis of their regular contract, with standard royalties covering all rights. Acceptance of this arrangement is, however, optional with the author.

Moreover, further arrangements have been made whereby a Radario will be written around the song and broadcast coincident with the appearance of the song upon the market.

The type of song submitted should be of either of the two types known as "popular" and "semi-classical." Songs may be submitted with or without music.

Further information concerning the contest and the nature of the songs to be submitted may be obtained by writing, enclosing self-addressed, stamped envelope, to

Writer's Digest Song Contest Editor

15 West 6th Street **Cincinnati, Ohio**

THE WRITER'S DIGEST

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR WRITERS OF SHORT STORIES, PHOTOPLAYS, POEMS, POPULAR SONGS, Etc.

T. C. O'DONNELL, EDITOR

VOLUME III NOVEMBER, 1923 NUMBER 12

The History of a Manuscript

By J. BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS

Author of "The Stork's Nest," "Fran," "Lahoma," "Soul of a Serf," "Failed Studio Director, Broadcasting Station WLW

April 15, 1902, I began a new novel, "Benton Cabot."

May 26th. Finished "Benton Cabot," which I have decided to call "Emmy: a Story of North Missouri."

June 2nd. Sent the manuscript to McClure, Phillips & Co., book publishers.

July 12th. Letter from S. S. McClure: "Your 'Emmy' goes back to you today after a delay which was due entirely to the long consideration we found it necessary to give before arriving at a conclusion. Those of us who liked it here, liked it very much indeed; those of us who do not like it like it not at all. And while we have gone over it from every point of view and have decided not to undertake the publication of it, I would like to make you share with me the confidence that the book will not only be published but by some good house very willingly."

September 2nd. Sent manuscript to Harpers; returned after sixteen days.

September 24th. Sent manuscript to Lee & Shepherd.

October 4th. A letter from S. S. McClure: "If you have not disposed otherwise of 'Emmy,' and can afford the time it will take for one more reading, we would be very much obliged if you would return it to us, and would be glad to pay all charges."

October 14th. 'Emmy' came back from Lee & Shepherd, who did not find it available "for their line." Sent it to McClure & Phillips, as requested.

November 28th. 'Emmy' comes home and Mr. McClure writes: "After 'Emmy' left us the last time we doubted the wisdom of our rejecting the manuscript. It is an unusually nice story in many ways. We shall appreciate very much your sending us something else."

December 1st. Sent manuscript to Fleming H. Revell.

February 23, 1903. After keeping the

(Mr. Ellis' experiences as narrated in this article should be an inspiration to those new writers who wonder if manuscripts ever are accepted. Two points we wish especially to emphasize: first the fact that the novel did *get read by the publishers, even though it was by a new writer; and second, that Mr. Ellis never lost faith in his story, but kept it constantly on the go.—The Editor.)*

manuscript eighty-four days, Mr. Doran returns it with the remark that at this time they are not ready to consider a story from me.

March 6th. McClurg Publishing Co. reply to my inquiry that they will examine "Emmy," though from my description they hardly think it is what they want.

April 22nd. Well, it wasn't what they wanted! Manuscript returned with suggestion that I try Bobbs-Merrill Co.

May 12th. Bobbs-Merrill return the manuscript after a stay of eighteen days.

July 22nd. Lothrop returns our young lady; they don't want any manuscript this year.

December 9th. Herbert S. Stone Co., after keeping the manuscript 137 days, write, saying they hope soon to send me a definite decision.

December 23rd. Stone sends back 'Emmy.' Liked her mighty well, but—

January 19, 1904. Manuscript goes to Frederick A. Warne.

March 3rd. Returning "Emmy," Mr. Warne says they take only such books as would find a ready sale in England.

April 24th. The Century Company, after holding "Emmy" forty-five days, writes to ask if I would be willing to make the heroine older—say eighteen or nineteen instead of, as at present, sixteen. And if so, how soon could I resubmit the manuscript?

June 6th. "Emmy," two years older, takes her second trip to the Century Company.

June 21st. Manuscript returned. I am asked, now, to get the hero a year or so older, and to omit some of the dialect.

September 20th. Douglas Z. Doty writes for the Century Co., that they cannot agree on my twice-revised manuscript. It would stand a better chance with the readers, he says, if it were retyped; they will stand half the expense if I will pay half. I answer—go ahead.

November 14th. "The final verdict of this house," Mr. Doty writes, "is that we do not believe the book 'Emmy' would prove a commercial success." He suggests that I try Bobbs-Merrill Co. Also there is a bill for $20—my half of the retyping. So "Emmy" comes back from the Century Co. after a delay of 255 days.

December 24th. McClure & Phillips, having expressed a wish to see "Emmy" since her advance in age, she went for a third trip to this hospitable house. She was rejected today—and tomorrow is Christmas Day! However, to soften the blow, their reader, Miss Viola Rosebro, offers to try the Macmillan Company with the manuscript, if I am willing. Which, am I not? Ha!

February 6, 1905. Macmillan returns "Emmy" after forty-one days.

February 26th. Miss Viola Rosebro, at her own expense, sends the manuscript to Doubleday, Page & Co.—who are "interested;" that only.

March 16th. "Emmy" went away on her seventeenth trip today—this time to Moffat, Yard & Co.

April 4th. A note from Moffat, Yard & Co., approving of the manuscript, and asking if I would be willing to change the name to "Stork's Nest;" and another note from Miss Rosebro to my mother, hoping that "Emmy" has by now fallen into friendly hands. As at last she has.

July 21st. Receive last of the proofs of "Stork's Nest."

September 8th. Receive proofs of the four illustrations.

October 1st. Came my advance copy of the novel.

October, 1913. Eight years after publication, Moffat, Yard & Co., open a scenario department, and ask me to give them the photoplay rights to one of my novels. I offer them "Stork's Nest." They reply that they can see no chance for a photoplay in that book.

November, 1914. A letter from Miss Florence Gerald, of New York; she thinks "Stork's Nest" has photoplay possibilities. I agree to let her act as my agent.

August 6, 1915. Telegram from Miss Gerald. Photoplay rights sold to the Metro Pictures Corporation.

Later: "Emmy of Stork's Nest" was shown at the Chautauqua, in Plattsburg, Mo., the village where I was reared—to

(*Continued on page* 64)

Corresponding for Trade Journals

In which the author tells the new writer just how to get a start in trade journal correspondence

By ARTHUR G. KEENEY

Many authors find it advisable, even imperative, to invent means of assuring themselves an income while learning to market the best brain-products of which they are capable, and those who have tried contributing to trade papers often have found this work productive of a steady monthly income.

Writers seeking an easy way to make a fortune should avoid trade papers, for the number of those who have become wealthy through their contributions to trade publications is nil. The work is hard and exacting if the writer undertakes to do it on a large scale, and if one is to derive a respectable income from this work, he certainly will find it necessary to work steadily and assiduously.

One successful trade paper contributor estimates that the average writer must turn out five hundred to one thousand articles annually in order to earn what is generally accepted as a good income. This estimate, perhaps, will have a tendency to discourage the writer who has not engaged in trade paper work, but after a year's experience in this field the average writer will concede that it is easily possible for an industrous trade paper contributor to turn out one thousand articles every year.

The writer without any business experience, or without any real knowledge of the fundamental principles of business, will find it difficult to write what usually is termed "feature articles" for trade papers. The best trade paper editors want the best material obtainable, and this cannot be produced by the writer who knows little or nothing about modern business. True, the observant writer will learn a great deal about merchandising methods within a short time after entering the trade paper field, but the inexperienced writer will do well to steer clear of the disappointments that assuredly will be his if he attempts to write business articles while ignorant of business itself.

In every town of 25,000 population or more one writer can build up a profitable business corresponding for trade papers. While contributing news items to these papers, this writer may be able to learn, by actual experience, just what kind of feature material is wanted by trade paper editors. What is most important, from the average writer's viewpoint, he will be earning while learning, if he goes about trade paper work from this vantage point.

Suppose a business man in your town establishes a bakery. There is a bakery trade publication that will pay for a news item containing all available information concerning the new bakery. The trade paper will want to know the name of the owner of the enterprise, the cost and size of the plant, the products and the daily output.

Later, when you have learned more about trade paper work, you probably will be able to sell an article descriptive of the same bakery's methods of selling, delivering, advertising, etc.

If a confectionery is established in your town, a confectionery trade paper will pay for the news item.

When a prominent hardware merchant dies, a hardware trade journal will be glad to send a check for a brief resume of the merchant's business career. If the merchant served as an officer of a hardware dealer's association, the news item concerning his death will be of more value to the trade paper.

If the shoe dealers of your state hold a convention, an interesting account of the convention can be sold. There are several trade papers which circulate among retail shoe dealers and all of them are in the market for material of this kind.

It will be readily apparent to the experi-

enced writer that a few news items along the lines illustrated here will not assure the writer a large income. This being true, the man or woman contemplating trade paper work of this kind must arrange to contribute to, or correspond for, a number of trade papers.

One writer of my acquaintance who lives in a town of 25,000 population, earns approximately $150 monthly from work of this kind. Of course, he does not depend solely upon his own town for material. In the average town of 25,000 population there is not sufficient news of a nature to interest trade papers that would afford one man a respectable income.

This writer arranged with a local newspaper to give him all the "exchanges" it did not wish to preserve. These "exchanges," or newspapers from other towns, provide this writer with many news items of a nature desired by the trade papers for which this writer is correspondent. This arrangement enables the writer to "cover" an entire state instead of depending only upon the town in which he lives.

In order to earn approximately $150 monthly, this writer contributes news items to twenty-four trade papers. He is the accredited correspondent of trade journals in New York, Chicago, Boston and other cities, and frequently encounters news that is salable to trade papers in other cities. Included among the trade papers for which he is correspondent are papers circulating in the following fields: Confectionery, bakery, hardware, lumber, building materials, automobile, music, motion picture, women's wear, grocery, general merchandise, etc. For all of these this writer succeeds in obtaining desirable material and every month brings a check from every publication in the list.

This writer's income is not limited to $150 monthly, for he sells dozens of articles to trade papers every month, and secures this more pretentious material while gathering the news items.

In order to obtain his connection as correspondent for these trade papers, this writer applied by letter to the editors. He informed them that he was ideally situated as regards gathering news in the fields covered by their publications, and within a few weeks this writer built up a very profitable trade paper clientele.

Trade paper editors almost always are willing to provide their correspondents with sample copies of their publications in order that the correspondents may familiarize themselves with the kind of material that is wanted and the manner in which it is handled. Many trade papers place their correspondents on their mailing lists, thus enabling the correspondents to keep in closer touch with the publications for which they gather material.

Study Every Trade Journal

The beginner in trade paper work will find it almost invaluable to study every trade journal obtainable. Visits to local merchants and other business men will enable the prospective trade paper correspondent to procure discarded copies of trade papers. Almost every merchant subscribes to one or more trade papers and if he does not wish to part with a copy he almost always can be induced to permit the writer to examine a copy in the store.

Constant reading of trade papers will afford a writer an excellent opportunity to learn what the editors want and how they want it written. Fine writing is not essential.

Trade paper editors are seeking writers who know what to write and how to write it. Good English, of course, is an asset, but the trade paper contributor who can pack practical ideas into his articles will sell stuff to editors who constantly reject fine writing containing little more than skilfully grouped words. One advantage of breaking into trade paper work through the medium of correspondence is the writer's opportunity to pick up business parlance, always valuable to the writer addressing an audience of business men.

When a trade paper correspondent demonstrates his capacity and reliability, he will find a surprisingly large number of assignments being given him by editors of the papers for which he is working. Editors have an uncanny way of knowing the inner "workings" of a business in your home

town, and when you have proven your ability to write acceptable news items you will find editors willing to help you graduate into the more difficult (and more remunerative) phases of trade paper work. Trade paper contributors frequently receive letters from editors asking for articles descriptive of methods employed by business men in the writer's vicinity.

Beginners in trade paper work should realize that accuracy is essential. This doesn't mean "correct spelling;" it means that the writer must verify every fact contained in his stories. Guess-work will soon result disastrously for the writer who is too lazy or careless to investigate fully everything concerning which there is the slightest doubt. To misquote a business man whom you have interviewed is to court unpleasantness, for the man who is prone to condone the errors in his daily newspapers will not be so lenient when an error occurs in his trade paper.

(*Continued on page* 60)

The American Photoplay

A popular novelist, dramatist, and the foremost writer of photoplays looks into the future of the screen drama

By RUPERT HUGHES

Author of "Souls for Sale," "The Old Nest," Miss 318," "Clipped Wings," "Excuse Me," etc., etc.

The motion picture can do some of the things that all the other arts can do, and many things that no other art can do. It occupies part of the fields of painting, sculpture, music, drama, poetry, history, philosophy and all the forms of fiction. It uses all these arts as helps. The motion picture offers to the story weaver marvelous opportunities that have only been touched upon. Everywhere that human sympathy or human imagination are to be exercised, the moving picture opens a new world.

The great trouble with other forms of art or fiction and drama is that they have to be translated into many languages in order to be understood, except in a limited field.

In the moving picture, however, a really universal language is spoken. What few titles are used are such as can easily be translated into any other language.

Motion picture stories written in the American language have far greater popularity with American audiences than stories written in any other language. This is my firm belief.

In the motion picture one must give the people something they can best understand. They want to see people like themselves, doing the same things we all do.

One of the greatest handicaps at the present time is that each producer wants to make a picture that is "universal" in its appeal.

Yet something aimed to appeal to everyone is most likely to appeal to no one.

The reason for this condition is the high cost of production that makes a tremendous distribution necessary if a producer is to meet his expenses and make a reasonable profit.

Whereas the stage has been developing for two thousand years, motion pictures have grown to their present remarkable extent in about twenty years. And with the increasing development that is inevitable they will approximate the stage in the rather important respect that each production will not have to be universal in its appeal.

Many authors are now beginning to see in terms of the motion picture, rather than in terms of the written word, and by so doing they are beginning to write directly for the screen.

Telling Observation

By HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS

Author of "The Plot of the Short Story," "The Art of Writing Photoplays," etc.

There was a time in my youthful arrogance when I rather condemned certain older writers of my acquaintance who went about — almost literally — pencil and notebook in hand taking pot-shots at the clay pigeons of life. I thought myself much superior in being better able to create life out of the whole cloth of my imagination.

Now, I find myself come back to the self-same first principles. True, I still try to create people and things and environment in my imagination, but it is the real things, people and experiences of life, after all, that I am "interpreting."

I am writing another novel. And what do I find myself doing, but filling it with the actual people I once knew and re-creating the environment in which they once lived, and tattling the things they once did! But I tell about all this in *my own way*. You may call it style, imagination, Impression, or me.

The test of one's manner of telling things is two-fold. First, does one tell things in some personal way that differs from the way all other people would tell the same thing?

Second, does one so depict the person, event or circumstance, in such a manner that the average reader will be imbued with a sense of conviction of reality or recognition. In other words, when he speaks the writer must become an interpreter of truth!

What is truth in writing? One man's truth may be another man's lie! Some see only the outside; others only the inside of things. Both these extremists go through life missing half of it. The perfect whole life consists of both inside and out. Yet there is an art in so writing that the reader will see and feel the whole man and the full scene and the rounded thing through a deft use of psychology alone.

I am engaged on a series of articles now appearing in *Shadowland,* in the writing of which I was confronted with these problems. I am attempting to tell about ten foreign cities, in such a manner that the reader will know or recognize them on reading the articles. I was instructed not to write a travel article. I was only allowed two thousand words for each article.

My articles had to be based upon actual *facts*. I must write suggestively, psychologically, philosophically. I must seek out characteristic episodes where I caught the soul of the people in one of its "universal moments." I must single out an outstanding *symbol* that caught the personality of the whole city. I must segregate incidents that would reveal its tonal moods. I must filtrate its motivating passion. I must write my own impressions, yet give expression to noneother than the reader's impressions.

Of London, for instance, I said:

> ". . . On the other side of the Square England's real National Theater had been set up in a six-foot radius, and when I arrived the play that could count the longest run in the history of the theater was in full swing—Punch and Judy! . . . Every Englishman in that crowd had seen this classic a score of times or more. Yet he stood there again, knowing that his supper was growing cold at home, with a little drizzle of December rain penetrating his quick and the rumble of a thousand buses almost drowning Punch's squeaky voice. He stood there with all his native dignity askew, gaping receptively, his emotions on tiptoe, a rather silly smile playing awkwardly on his lips, boyish England hovering in the man of Britain's eyes.
>
> "I could never be sure which was the more entertaining—Punch and Judy or John Bull and his family at play!"

In depicting Vienna my limitations were more restricted. Vienna is out-and-out

foreign and decidedly less known—but not less interesting:

". . . Old Vienna is no more! The Royal Palace on the Ring is thrown open to the hoi polloi and they stride through the Queen's Bedchamber with their hats on at an insolent angle and a vague feeling of abjectness in their hearts at the thought that simple Franz Joseph no longer fathers them, but that they are at the mercy of plain men no bigger and no better than themselves. . . . One night I went with some American friends to a ball held in the Ceremonial Salons of the Old Palace. . . . Everybody and his wife and best girl were dancing in two of the great rooms. . . . Farther on I strolled into the Presence Chamber. On the dais—where formerly sat Franz Joseph and later Carl, and received homage of the Elect on bended knee—there now reposed casually two very stout and slightly under Middle Class persons, in two of the several gildes and cut-velvet chairs. What does it matter if they were Herr and Frau Delicatessen, or Herr and Frau Arbeiter? They had caught the ruling gesture and there was something in their mien that spelled power and they were indubitably in the King's seat! . . . Inevitably, one felt and thought, "By Jove, if here we haven't Austria herself!"

Finally, I came to a German city. I had to remember that there were always two Germanys—one in the south, the other in the north—Bavaria and Prussia. In war both are alike; in peace, they are very unlike. Munich is the capitol of Bavaria and it impressed me very much like this:

". . . . Ah, Munich! Thy middle name is Beer! We trust that we are not prohibited from mentioning at least a few of her brew surnames: Hofbrau! (frantic cheering); Kochelbrau! ('More! More!'); Pschorrbrau! (empty sobs); Hackerbrau! ('Atta Boy!'); Burgerbrau! (silence) . . . Prosit! . . .What is all this *talk* about Prohibition —Comedy or Tragedy? Who's doin' all the shootin', anyway? . . . Well, in Munich beer is both comedy and tragedy. It is not cheap. Yet everybody—man, woman and child—must have their beer—quarts of it daily. In Munich beer is meat and drink, morning and evening, sunshine and shadow, riches and pennilessness, pleasure and pain! In beer are old Kaisers and War and Indemnities forgotten—and new rulers and new strife and new obligations created. In beer Munich forgets all bitterness nightly and remembers it doubly in the morning! Beer is Germany's amber poppy, her goddess Lethe, her wassail bowl! . . . Yet, in all the world there is nothing quite like real Munchner Beer! Prosit! . . ."

I saw all these things, I felt them—perhaps I *thought* them most of all!

In how far can we suggest the facts? Facts set down mathematically limit their boundaries, just as there is finality in the sum of one and one. There is no place for the emotions or the imagination. It is the dispassionate, inevitable conclusion — one and one is two, and there is no getting away from it. There is nothing between the lines, nothing latent behind the problem. Thought is satisfied. All discussion is settled. The end is reached! On the other hand, state that one plus one equals *one*—as we show conclusively in the happy marriage—and we pique curiosity, challenge discussion, arouse interest.

Imagination is the most individual trait possessed by the human being. Give the reader's imagination a chance! Some readers have little or no imagination; others have unlimited scope. When we present our subject suggestively we do both classes a service; we gratify both.

If you were to gaze over the amphitheater of the coliseum in the moonlight, what would you see? Would it be just an unsightly ruin that ought to be torn down. Or would it be the playground of Nero, with Christians, maybe, filing from yonder broken gate and hungry tigers waiting to meet them?

THE ERASER

By Ida M. Thomas

"The pen is mighty." Often we
Have heard and read this truth.
'Twas quoted in the copy books
Back in our early youth.

But second only to the pen,
Is the eraser's might,
Although no flowery eulogies
Do we to it indite.

All credit should be given it;
Its services are great,
For it will, in a second, our
Mistakes eradicate

And anything that quickly will
Make right the wrong we do,
Is worthy of, it seems to me,
At least a line or two

The Technique of Verse Writing

This is Article Number Five in Mr. Kennedy's series of practical studies in the construction of poetry

By THOMAS KENNEDY
Instructor of English at Carnegie Institute of Technology

Building the Poem

"Will you play upon this pipe?"
"My lord, I cannot."
"I pray you."
"Believe me, I cannot."
"I do beseech you."
"I know no touch of it, my lord."
"'Tis as easy as lying; govern these ventages with your fingers and thumbs, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most excellent music."

. . . . .

"If to do were as easy as to know what 'twere good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages had been princes' palaces."

Through four articles, we have considered in elementary fashion the mechanics of poetry. We have taken all the wheels apart to find out what makes the clock tick, and have been, perhaps, a little disappointed to find nothing complicated or mysterious at all. One criticism of the articles that has come to me from a young writer is that the material presented is very simple. Well, it is simple because these elements *are* simple, and that is all there is to it.

Yet I can imagine some ambitious novice replying with the air of one exposing a fraud: "We know all these principles, but still we find it impossible to write in verse —or at least, to write well in verse. There must be a trick somewhere; a something which you have not told. How does one actually set out to write the poem? How does he apply these principles in practice?" Answering these questions may involve some difficulties, but they can be answered; and it is the purpose of this article to show how a poem actually grows up in the mind, and on the paper of the poet.

The writer of such an article as this one is always open to the unpleasant suspicion of wanting to talk about himself or his own work; however, if the reader will remember that only from personal experience can the material for this type of exposition be gathered, he will see that the suspicion is unjust. Whether the poem used as an example be good or bad, it is an excellent example of how a poem is built up. It is used solely because the writer must use his own experience, since he knows only how his own mind works.

Some years ago, I passed a summer on the margin of a little lake in Wisconsin. The spot was a lonely one, with only two or three summer cottages in a dense wood. From a screened porch that served as living and sleeping room, one looked through a tracery of leaves out over two-thirds of a mile of deep, clear water, to a steep opposite shore crowned with a forest of pines. To the right, the lake swept out into a wide reach surrounded by trees and marsh; to the left, it narrowed gradually into a long bay at whose end a farmhouse nestled under tall elms beside the little river that poured out of the lake.

In the utter loneliness of this quiet place, with only the harsh cry of a heron or the eerie note of a loon to break the half-silence of wind among the trees and the barely audible touch of ripples on the shore, it was only natural that inanimate things should come to have a personality; a conscious and human existence. And as all the landscape appeared to center in the lake, framing it, shutting it in, looking toward it, the lake itself naturally came to be the center of the mysterious life that made itself felt more and more as the days grew into months.

At last, when one plunged in of a morning, and swam out into the cool, green water sixty or eighty feet deep, he actually felt as though he were keeping a tryst, as though a lake spirit and he were meeting

—almost—in the intimate communion of old and dear friends. And then the summer ended, and I came away bearing with me only the memory of an unforgetable experience.

Here, if anywhere, was the raw material for a poem. Yet how to write it, and what to write, I did not know. It had moved me to the depths of my being, but it was not at all crystallized into definite impressions. Crystallized is doubly the word; for the writer of a poem is like a crystal-gazer, who, looking into the globe of experience, sees at first only clouds from which the picture gradually emerges.

I knew a poem was there; I did not know what it was. So I wrote in my notebook the two words, "The Lake," and left them as a reminder. Every time I looked through the book, that title stared me in the face and set my mind to working. Thus, little by little, emerged the idea of the poem. But I did not start writing.

The next notation I made was something like this: "Idea of a man who fell in love with a lake. What would happen?" I could see indistinctly the picture of two dissimilar beings struggling to each other through a barrier of natural law. What would be the outcome? I did not know. Still I did not begin to write.

Then, mulling over my notes one evening, I became aware that if the curious passion of these two spirits became strong enough one or the other of them would be drawn through the barrier, whatever penalty of broken law might result.

Immediately I felt it must be the man who would overleap the barrier, for only so could it be written without too much the tone of a fairy story for children. I wanted it to be a serious and beautiful poem.

Up to this time, I had carefully avoided putting the idea in words, except for the notes mentioned; for it is a fact that once put into words, ideas are hard and unmalleable, not to be worked or changed at will as when they are fluid in the mind. Now I felt that I was ready to write. The tone of the poem, as can be seen, was pretty well fixed in my own mind. Almost at once a first line came to me:

"He felt the water close on him like arms."

Stop for a moment. This line is important in many respects. It determines, in all probability, the matter of the entire poem. We are to write, then, in iambic pentameter, unless we find after further experiment that this meter will not work. The first line also determines the tone of the poem. We get by suggestion the idea of personality in the lake. Let me say in passing that the suggestive line is almost always better than the completely obvious one. How much better the above line than this one, also in iambic pentameter:

"A spirit lived within a little lake."

The first one says by suggestion all that the second says in definite words, and in addition hints at the embrace of love which is to be the point of the whole poem. We have only to carry forward this idea. After thinking for a moment, we change our period to a colon and proceed:

"He felt the water close on him like arms:
Cool arms, as passionately firm as tender;
And passing ripples leaped to kiss his cheek."

We now are stuck for a moment, and write badly, lines that will have to be crossed out:

"The lake was wooing him! Uncouth alarms
Snatched at his heart and made him suddenly weak."

No, this will not do. Not only does it break the tone we desire, but the bald statement, "The lake was wooing him!" loses entirely the feeling of elusive mystery that is to be the life of the poem. So we think for a moment—or an hour, if necessary—and write again.

"They were so like to lips that strange alarms
Groped in his mind: What did the water seek
That, like a woman, it could feign surrender?"

Better. With some revision, it may do. Now it is impossible, in smaller compass than a volume, to tell all that went on in the mind while it was producing those six lines. The reader can see, however, that in the first three lines, we have no rhyme. Unless the poem is to be in blank verse, we must begin to catch up these loose ter-

minals; so while one part of the mind is busy with selection and arrangement of words, another part is busy saying: "arms, harms, farms, alarms; tender, slender, surrender; cheek, weak, seek." Thus we have the rhymes ready when we need them.

Sometimes this search for a rhyme is very difficult, indeed; often, an entire stanza must be recast that the writer may say exactly what he means and get satisfactory rhymes as well. In this case, it has been comparatively simple. Having written our six lines, we have a stanza rhyming *abcacb*. The stanza makes a complete unit of the poem, emotionally, as well as in sense. If we are wise, we will not complicate matters by trying to make it longer. Let us call our stanza form settled.

Beginning a new stanza, however, is not always a simple matter. What are we to say next? As it turns out, we leave too great a gap between stanzas, and have to fill in later. What we actually write next is the fourth stanza:

"As he swam out, he saw the yellow sands
Recede beneath into a cloud of green
Where fish with staring eyes moved out
and in."

Parts of this strike us as bad, but we write on, after a little hesitation and searching for words:

"He saw brown weeds reach up like
drowned men's hands,
Men whom the lake had loved and then
forgot,
And hidden down below a flowered screen."

Space limitations forbid a mention of all corrections, but we have fumbled for words a good deal. Our page is pretty well scratched up with corrections and interlineations. We now look at our stanza only to see that it does not rhyme correctly; that line three is bad, the word *staring* breaking the tone; "hidden down below" does not sound well. We have again departed from our tone of question and mystery with the positive assertion of line five.

So we try again. We do not throw away what we have written; line by line we go over it, trying to correct and revise rather than to recreate. The first two lines will do with a single change; *cloud* must become *mist*. Why? Because mist is less dense; because one can see through it a little; in short, because it has the proper "feel."

Line three must be changed a good deal. Not only is *staring* a bad word, not only does the terminal fail to rhyme, but "moved out and in" gives no idea of the mysterious coming and going of fish, which appear and disappear as though by magic.

In place of *staring*, let us try for color and harmonious weirdness. Crimson? Perhaps. But in a moment we will find it does not fit the meter of our newly formed line; besides, the eyes are not exactly crimson. Finally, we write:

"Where fish with red eyes were, and then
were not."

The fourth line will do. In the two remaining ones, we change the tone as indicated above, and at the same time change the unhappy word-combination.

"Had the lake loved these men—and then
forgot,
And hidden them beneath a flowered
screen?"

Now we have a stanza that rhymes correctly and is fairly satisfactory as to wording and meter. The transition to another stanza this time fairly stares us in the face:

"Should he so lie one day? He did not care,
For lips were at his lips, eyes at his eyes,
And white breasts under his strong-
muscled heart."

Immediately, we stop. That third line will not do at all. *Muscled!* God above! What a word in such a place where we wish to suggest the passage from the material to the ethereal. It is like a brass band at the moment of a miracle—an obvious impertinence. Try again.

"Arms were around him, and two white
breasts under——"

Better, but not good enough, because it breaks the grammatical structure at a moment when we are striving to reach a climax. Once more:

"White arms around him, and two white
breasts under;
And like a garment was her floating hair;
So that he drifted down in the great
wonder——"

And we are stuck. What happened? Just what did? Shall we tell, or shall we leave the reader to surmise? We try,

"And fell asleep in——"

It will not do. People do not fall asleep at the moment of a great wonder.

"Rapt in a bliss of——"

Commonplace! Too much like a snappy story. After some moments of pondering, we see the light. We must not be too explicit. Miracles are not explicit; nobody knows how they happen. When a saint is transfigured, a cloud receives him out of our sight. We must suggest, and leave the reader at the outskirts of the shining cloud. Now we can write the line.

"Of one last, rapturous moment of surprise."

This is better, but not satisfactory. Two words spoil it. *Last* breaks the miracle, and rapturous is too much on the ordinary, like a child getting ice-cream at a party. Away with them.

"Of one ecstatic moment of surprise"——

We are satisfied, despite the clamor of a friend or two against the word *ecstatic*.

Now we read over the poem, and find it is not done. The break between our first and second stanzes is painfully obvious; our bridge is lacking a span; we must go back and see what is missing.

First of all, we discover that the poem as it stands raises some hard questions. Such experiences do not usually take place upon a first meeting. No, this great adventure must come as the climax of a series of experience. Then, too, we must

(*Continued on page 57*)

(Broadcasting Station WLW announces a prize of $25 for the best radario submitted during the month (see our editorial page). We have asked Mr. Smith, who is Studio Director at WLW, to give the principle which should guide the writer in planning his radario, which he does in the following article. "Oh, What's the Use" is the DIGEST prize winning radario, and will be published in full next month.—The Editor.)

Writing Your Radario

By FRED SMITH

Studio Director, Broadcasting Station WLW

The splendid qualities of the radario, "Oh, What's the Use?" by Lillian Taft Maize, should be worth noting by everyone who expects to participate in future radario writing contests. In the first place, it is delightfully humorous. In the second, it deals with a phase of city life perplexingly comical to every one who drives a car. In the third place, the characters are real—amazingly human—and finally, it presents the subject in a manner permitting wonderful possibilities for radio production.

The scene is in the rooms of the Women's Civic Promotion Club in "any city between Boston and San Francisco." An Irish lieutenant of police has been invited to speak to the ladies on traffic regulations. Without telling more, we pass on with merely saying that the interrupted speech, the side-lines of conversation, and the calling to order of the loquacious women by Madame the President, are all handled with fine artistry and clever understanding. The point is, that the theme is a universal one just now, dealing especially with a phase of our life which may very justly be called an "American Custom."

Now here is a keynote to what art, all art, should be in our country: Something that handles with understanding our customs. We will favor, in monthly contests to be conducted by the Crosley Manufacturing Company, those radarios which deal with *American Customs*. All too often the

conception of "customs" carries one to ideas of fixed national habits in the sense of celebrating holidays and historical dates. But the real customs of a people are those which, like unwritten laws, govern most their actions. For example, the Saturday night trading in small cities and towns, the protracted meetings in rural districts, and the police courts in the cities.

The American race is the world's greatest emotional melting pot. We are a sentimental people. We are in the greatest and strangest process of moulding humanity history has ever known. In other countries, in other lands, invasions of races came one at a time, the strong and ambitious invaders running over and conquering the degenerate occupants. But our development is of another nature; for all the races of the east and of the west have poured in upon us simultaneously, giving us little time to crystallize as a race of fixed customs.

We are even a different people from the Americans of twenty years ago. The war and constant immigration have changed us. A race of people filters into us: the Jews, for example. In a generation the change in their customs is phenomenal; the patriarchs lament the breaking of the *Shabbos* and the falling away from ancient customs. As with this race, so it is with others, and the great compounded whole is the *American Race*.

What is it all about, this great American, restless, active spirit of ours? What are we doing? Where are we going? Here indeed are problems for the radario writer to work upon—problems to present, but not to solve in drama. So, for the love of art and the hope of winning in radario contests, keep away from solutions! Let the public be judge—after *you present the problem.*

How to Write Humor

By HENRY FISHER

The Art of Self Criticism

Once upon a time there was a man who wrote three varieties of jokes: good, bad and indifferent. He possessed a wonderful sense of humor that would have paid him large dividends in the form of remuneration from the editors, but the power to criticize his own product was lacking.

He made a habit of sending in everything he wrote—a sort of hit-or-miss style. Many a joke that should have gone to the waste-basket went out to consume the editor's precious time.

One bright day, this man happened by a news-stand and purchased a copy of THE WRITER'S DIGEST, wherein he discovered one of a series of articles entitled, "How To Write Humor." In this article the writer laid down a set of rules, which, if followed, would tend to elevate one's bank book and enhance his prestige among the editors.

Rule One, was to write as many jokes as your time would permit. In doing so, the brain would be kept active and one joke would lead to another.

Rule Two, was to take the five best out of every ten and lay them to one side. The remaining five *must* go into the waste-basket. Common sense alone tells us that if you think that they are "not so good," then surely the editor would arrive at the same conclusion.

Rule Three, was to file away the five best jokes for at least one week. After that period you will have discovered that there are only three out of the apparently "good" ones that are really worth submitting to the anxious editor.

Having placed great faith in THE WRITER'S DIGEST and its contributors, the man turned over a new leaf in his business of professional humorist and began to follow the rules. It was not very long before he

discovered, to his good fortune, that the editors were accepting four jokes out of five instead of one out of five. He was by no means a critic of humor, but he had mastered the method of submitting nothing but the best. Every doubtful one found its place in the discard.

The moral of this fable is that the man who puts himself in the editor's place has found a place in the editor's heart.

If you were an editor, which five out of the following ten jokes would you deem acceptable?

1. *Jones*—How many Ford jokes have you heard so far?
   Bones—Just one. He's going to run for President.

2. *Miss U. S.*—My dogs are going to the country
   Miss Germany—My country is going to the dogs.

3. *Cohen*—What! You say you are married?
   Applicant—Certainly. What difference does it make?
   Cohen—Can't you read English? My partner advertised for a single entry bookkeeper.

4. *Hokus*—I understand Peru is not chilly.
   Pokus—Gwan! I don't Bolivia!

5. *Mrs. Brooks*—Norah, do I smell something burning on the stove?
   Cook—"Yes, ma'am. That's the brown rice pudding you ordered for dinner. I'm making it as brown as possible.

6. *Sue Burb*—Money is the master of courage.
   Jones—Not always. Have you ever attempted to purchase a railroad ticket with a thousand-dollar bill?

7. *Son*—Gee, ma, I wish I were an Eskimo!
   Mother—Why?
   Son—'Cause they don't take a bath from the day they're born until the day they die.

8. *Mother*—If you are naughty you will never go to heaven with me, Willie.
   Willie—I don't care! Then I'll go with papa.

9. *Tommy*—What makes that electric sign go 'round and 'round, daddy?
   Daddy—$5,000 a month, my son.

10. *Film Exchange Manager*—And when I opened the container the film was missing, with a pint of whiskey in its place.
    Assistant—Did you place the exhibitor under arrest?
    F. E. M.—Helno! I'm going over to pay him the difference!

You have, undoubtedly, come to the conclusion, that the last five are the best and that the first five should not be sent out. The first five, while somewhat witty, lack the humorous atmosphere. The last five bear the earmarks of perfection.

These ten jokes were all written the same day, among thirty others. Out of the entire forty, the writer selected the last five and sent them out. Not one of them were returned. My process of eliminating the wheat from the chaff brought home the bacon, nice and crisp, with my signature the only thing lacking to open communications between the receiving teller and yours truly.

The next time you see a joke upon the screen and, after hearing the torrent of laughter from the audience, say to yourself "what martyrs repose in the waste-basket to enhance the production of successful humor!"

(Mr. Fisher's next article will deal exclusively with the various forms of dialect used in jokes.—The Editor.)

BURIED TREASURE

By Maude Wood Henry

Try prospecting in your mind,
Dig in deep, it's most surprising
What you're liable to find—
Lots of things you'll soon be prizing;
Of God's riches there's a measure
In us all—a buried treasure.

Get a pick and try your mind,
Take a lantern or a drill;
Well worth while you soon will find,
Do it any way you will;
Talents oft are hid away
In a streak of ore called "pay."

You may strike a vein of gold,
Or diamonds, even Kohinoors.
If you do as you are told,
There's a mine that's wholly yours;
Why sit 'round like any clod
When you're intended for a god?

Words are in there, opalescent,
They are pearls for you to string;
Dig them out and make a present
To the world—and hear them ring;
There's many a sparkling, jeweled phrase
In there in richest chrysoprase.

Building The Photoplay Plot

This is the second of the most practical series of articles in photoplay construction that has thus far been written

By HOWARD T. DIMICK

Author of "Modern Photoplay Writing," "Photoplay Making," etc.

This account of synopsis writing should be read in connection with the article on plot making in the October issue of the DIGEST. Review that article before attempting to derive benefit from this.

Although I left off previously with a complete plot, a full sequence of major causes and effects, yet such is *not* a story. In order to build up a detailed, synoptical story from the plot, it is necessary at the onset to supply additional material, perhaps new characters of a minor type, perhaps additional incidents. Detail is now of paramount importance, for we have now reached that stage of *elaboration* which must work out the smaller details.

In this stage of the creative work, I am naturally concerned with external, *pictorial* features. In writing a synopsis the author is visualizing his characters and events largely as real people and happenings in the surroundings of life. His methods, although they must adhere to *pictorial* limitations, are naturalistic. But the continuity writer who prepares a working scenario of the story visualizes the material in terms of the *plant,* its equipment, and the policies of a producer. He is thinking of mechanisms, actors and actresses, expediency, and mechanical effectiveness. No outsider can go into such detail with hope of results; therefore, the problem of the synopsis writer is to produce a carefully detailed story of dramatic situations and lifelike people. That is the main problem.

The Story Begins Itself in Mind*

The synopsis must have a beginning. Where must I start? Well, I shall first introduce Don and his father, and detail their surroundings. Observe now, how I begin:

Hallway of handsome city home. Tasty but not too elaborate. Rather elegant.

Donald Felton, Sr., is receiving a telegram. *Smythe,* the butler, is in the background. Donald Felton, Sr., is a gray-haired, handsome, rather graceful personage. With a cigar that has gone out in his mouth he reads message. It tells him that Don (his son) will arrive home from school. He turns to Smythe, to whom he hands message, saying: "He'll be here in an hour now, Smythe." Smythe is properly glad to hear it.

Railway station—city. *Don, Jr.,* an athletic, buoyant, self-confident youth, who resembles his father somewhat, hurries forward with his bags, which he hands to uniformed chauffeur who meets him.

Hallway again. Donald, Sr., with Smythe and other servants grouped near him, is awaiting Don. The father's face lights up as he advances to meet his son, and the two men wring each other's hands. Don shakes hands with Smythe and has a pleasant nod for each of the servants, who seem glad to welcome him home.

Later. The library. Lights are turned up. There is a cheerful fire in the open fireplace.

Donald, Sr., and Donald, Jr., stroll into library and seat themselves beside a table before the fire. There are cigars on the table, and as the elder man pushes them toward his son he inadvertently knocks a picture from the table. He quickly recovers it, and as Don takes a cigar, looks at the portrait tenderly and reminiscently. It is the picture of a sweet-faced woman. He calls his son's attention to it, saying: "Your mother, my boy. Sad that she died before I made my money. She was a great loss to me." He sighs and puts the portrait carefully back in its place, while Don watches him understandingly.

Donald, Sr., now changes his mood. He turns to his son with a smile. Says: "Now that you are a graduate mining engineer, what are you going to do?" He laughs as he adds: "And remember that you are now 'on your own.'" Don assents with a confident nod. Don takes certain important-looking papers from a pocket. Opens packet. It is several ornate shares of stock in the Great Consolidated Oil Corporation of Smackdown, Arkansas. Don says pridefully: "I bought that while I was at school—think I'll go down and try the oil fields." The father nods understandingly. Hands back stock with a noncommittal smile. Says, "I'll give you fifty thousand the day you make your first lucky

* *This story, protected by copyright, must not be used in whole or in part by any person whomsoever, except by the permission of the author.*

strike." Don pats his stock knowingly and indicates that it will do the trick for him.

Some time later. Bedtime. Don is in his bedroom seated at a writing desk. He has finished a letter addressed to the Great Consolidated Oil Corporation, Smackdown, Arkansas. It ends by stating, "Will arrive next week to look over oil field and inspect your valuable properties. (Signed) Donald Felton, Jr." He rings for a servant and dispatches letter. Then begins preparations for bed. Whistles merrily. Fade.

There you see my beginning and something of my methods of development. I have used the semi-continuity form in order to impress upon beginners the necessity of *action* rather than *mere narration*. Film editors are sick of reading actionless stories. This story begins without a philosophical overture—often used. Every word counts. The beginning introduces the Felton household, displays their characters and attitude toward each other. It *prepares* by various references such as the showing of Don's oil stock for certain things to happen later. Some of these incidents shall have important *remote* effects, of which they are causes. At this point it is well, perhaps, to say that one's story should be thoroughly *thought out* and articulated before the synopsis writing begins.

Now, in a few scenes I can shift attention to Smackdown and the characters there. I have in this story a problem. It is that Bedo and Don *marry*, not as the usually happy ending of the synopsis, but as one of its contributing *incidents*. Of course, the raid on Marc's, and his death, must not be allowed to form a climax—it is a mere *crisis*. Instead, I must contrive to carry over the strands of suspense to the next crisis: The revelation of the glass and the salt water well. That demands that the story be not too *thin* or "open" in pattern. The thin story is the bane of editorial offices. Complicate the pattern where essential.

So, I now set about complications; supplying details, considering new characters, piecing together the mosaic of the events. There are *bothersome* details. But the plot which presents no problems, no real difficulties, is scarcely worth writing. Ease is too often identified with banality. To me the solution of structural and suspense problems is of great interest; and I do not shy away from them.

I know that a brief description of Smackdown and its environing oil field shall be necessary—one paragraph. It is in matters of this kind that the beginner most surely betrays himself. Most novices would go lengthily into detail about the town. But why not bring the detail out pictorially and by piecemeal—a bit at a time? That is the best method for a synopsis of moderate length. Do not try to write a story which shall extend to the length of a novelette.

Working Out the Story Strands

So I decide to show in rotation the principal backgrounds. There is the oil field, with its derricks and bunk-houses, some distance from the town. The road leading to town is much traveled. In town there is the court house, where the clerk's office is crowded with oil men and investors inspecting records and maps. There are the "joints" in full blast, where "Sweetie" Jones is seen. *Bud Jemmerson,* the sheriff, is in his office with his Chief Deputy. He is to be an important character, so I have selected for him a characteristic name.

There is a smooth-looking young man of furtive eye who is opening his mail in a small hole above Grigg's emporium. He opens a single letter. It is Don's missive announcing his arrival. The young man is instantly alert. Says with a smirk of serio-comic wisdom, "Guess I'd better move on over to Fort Worth!" Packs bag hurriedly; hangs gone-to-lunch-sign on office door. Exit. Later when Don arrives he will seek this office. Such incidents as that supply comedy, and the drama of *character* I am desirous to develop.

After Don has met Bedo and Marc has shown his dislike by forbidding her to see Don, the story strand must be woven into further detail. Don shall have an office, of course. He is an engineer and geologist. Sometimes Bedo can visit him on the sly. He is in love with her and urges his suit, but she cannot leave her father all alone. See? I now need a new character for minor work. I see in my mind one *Martin Bennett,* a no-account oil field laborer, who is too fond of "pepping himself up" on some of Marc's "white lightning." I can have him follow Bedo drunkenly to Don's office,

Don is not in. Bedo hides from Martin, who toys foolishly with a small, pocket magnifying glass on Don's desk, a gift of a design easily identified. This is preparation; and the glass is a *significant object* of the story. Don arrives and ousts Martin who is unable to press his attentions upon Bedo.

Plausibility

Plausibility and lifelike motivation guide me in my movements of the people and their meetings and activities. I ask myself, what shall Marc do when he discovers by chance that Bedo visits Don's office? He broods it over for a while, then takes down his black-snake whip and sets off alone for town. In the main joint Don talks with "Sweetie" Jones, who sees him lose the little glass and who picks it up. She meets Marc and annexes him so as to unburden her mind. They see Don at a distance and Marc fondles his whip suggestively, but the woman carries him off.

And there is "Brother" Pryam, the reformer, who has stirred up the outraged church-goers. His oratory nettles Bud Jemmerson, sheriff, who aims to run things according to law and to suit himself without any "sanctified help." He is fearful that all this talk will force him and his men to take measures they have been avoiding. Later this Pryam can preach the simple funeral sermon over Marc, the "dear departed" who will now be eulogized in the town newspaper as a forthright citizen! All these details I shall work into their proper sequences.

Don drops into the joint again to gamble —allured by the seemingly easy path to fortune. "Sweetie" has demanded a marriage license of Marc, who has, she says in self-pity, "dragged her down." He has refused too roughly, perhaps. Her mind grasps the details of revenge and flight. She carries an automatic pistol of small calibre. Marc still looks about for Don, but does not go to the joint. "Sweetie," in a maudlin state of emotion, is making her plans.

The actual details of the homicide are easily worked out. She lures Marc into a ravine below a bridge by a call for "help." His car is found on the bridge by Martin Bennett, who climbs down to investigate and finds the body, and a magnifying glass which he recognizes, it seems, beside it. The glass he takes for himself and goes on to report the crime. How did the glass get there? Well, of course, "Sweetie" remembered the apparent enmity of Marc for Don and as she had the glass on her person by chance, it occurred to her to throw suspicion off her own track until she could get away. Here the story is going into melodrama; but the ultimate effect of this will be unexpected because of *character* to be brought out later.

Don, who has been losing at cards, of course, is in the joint when it is raided by Bud, as was said in the October number. He thinks, because of Bedo, to warn Marc of the intended raid. Then there are the Federal agents, who have been snooping around for a day or two and who will meet the sheriff's men at Marc's.

The marriage of the young people will be an incident, not a climax. The suspense must be carried on. The magnifier will furnish this suspense in large measure. Martin Bennett has the glass. Now, how shall I connect him up with the action? Well, Don will organize his company to drill for oil, and Martin will be one of Pete McDade's drilling crew. When Don finds Martin asleep at the rig, he has Martin fired. In return Martin carries the glass to Bud Jemmerson and describes his find. Bud "cusses out" Martin, but the law is the law. Here is a murder; here is Don. Bud is flabbergasted. He cannot believe that Don is guilty. He will work on the case.

When the salt-water well comes in and little Don arrives, Bud is still sleuthing. He goes to Don's at dusk, and sees Don, Bedo, and the baby through a window. He returns to his office. There he has a vision; the faces of several characters float before his eyes. He sees Marc, Bedo, and Don; then Don and Bedo and Martin; then Don, Bedo and baby. Their faces with expressions characteristic of certain scenes of the story float before him. He makes up his mind. Puts glass carefully away. Stands before his shaving mirror and says to himself, "Bud Jemmerson, if the reformers in

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The A B C of Play Writing

In this, the third in her series of articles on the technique of play construction, Miss Mac Millan writes most convincingly about the true source of all dramatic material—just people.

By MARY MAC MILLAN

Author of "Short Plays," "More Short Plays," "Third Book of Short Plays," "The Little Golden Fountain," etc.

"Just as the villain was dragging the heroine to the window, the hero burst open the door!"

Is this a quotation? Not especially. But generally speaking, it is. It is a sort of composite quotation from dozens of dramas, vocal or silent. It indicates the plot and the chief characters in ninety-nine out of every hundred plays.

For it is a fact—a rather disillusioning one to the idealist, but a very comforting one to the young workman in drama—that the rules governing plays, the materials, the foundation, and the structure, are practically the same in all drama.

Strip a play of all scenery and ornament, of all the little differentiations that make entity and character, and you have left the same raw materials. Compare a play to a house—the foundations and beams and joists are not very different in different specimens. At a certain period in the construction of a house, the scaffolding of one looks pretty much like that of any other. And the scaffolding of your play, made up of characters and incidents, is twin brother to the bare structure of almost any other play. Or, compare a play to a human being: the framework is like the mere articulated bones, and, to the casual observer, all skeletons look pathetically alike. A play is very much like a kaleidescope in which the bits of broken glass are the characters; shake them and you have a certain pattern or story, shake them again and you get another.

That people are all alike and yet all quite different is one of the paradoxes of life, and that plays are all of the same stuff and yet are all very dissimilar is one of the paradoxes of art.

George Bernard Shaw says there are no new plots. He declares with a suave satisfaction that all his own plots are as old as the hills and boasts that he has the cleverness to handle them so that they appear new. I do not know that he goes farther but he might do so and say that there are no new types of character. That Adam and Jonah and Paul and Socrates and Caesar and King Arthur and Charlemagne and St. Francis are types that still persist today. Moreover, that plays have today as they had yesterday and will have tomorrow, the same old stage *dramatis personae* the hero, heroine, villain, old man, old woman, ingenue, juvenile, etc. This will sound like anathema to the radicals who proclaim the new art. But it is none the less true.

On the other hand the plays of today do not seem like the older plays—and as a matter of fact they are different, different in story and in their people. For while types persist there are variations of type because the individual changes. Life does change, the world grows, although this change is so slow that it is scarcely perceptible. And change and growth is through the individual. It is never a community that creates a new invention. It is the individual. The group and the community are useful enough for safe-guarding but achievements having great effect upon human life have always been accomplished by the individual. And the individual does vary, change, and, I believe, improve, finally affecting a change in the race.

The type persists. That is to say, we are still human beings, men and women, babies, young men in love, old women grown pathetic. We still eat and drink

and sleep on beds and ride—well, perhaps originally we climbed, then walked, then rode on horses or camels, then in chariots, coaches, carriages, automobiles. Styles change—styles not only in clothes but in furniture and pictures and baby carriages and the dogs we keep for pets. What I am trying to say is that matter persists but the form of it is forever changing. And, to repeat myself—I said in the first of these articles that I would probably do so—the paradox of the drama is that plays are always alike and yet are everlastingly changing. So do not be discouraged when conservatives tell you there is nothing new under the sun, and do not be upset when radicals say that everything is new and *should* be new and *is* new. I have dwelt upon this fact of the new and fact of the old because it is a stumbling-block to those persons who are beginning to analyse the drama.

Newspaper people have a way of calling everything a "story." Well, everything *is* a story. A play is a story. A story is about some particular individual. Therefore a play is a story about some particular individual. So you have your hero or heroine, as the case may be. He—or she—may not be very heroic. He may be pathetic or tragic or humorous, but he must be the central figure about which your play turns. Even in a detective play where the interest is spread all over like butter on a slice of bread, there is one person who really is the centre of interest. In "Sherlock Holmes," of course, it is Holmes. In "The Cat and the Canary," a new and exceedingly fine thriller, it is the young girl.

Your hero may be noble or strong or clever, he may be the one to solve the problem, save the right and put his heel on the wrong, work out the tangle; or he may be the one who is deceived, put upon, victimized, or, by his own weakness or stupidity, he may be the one who makes the tangle.

In other words, indeed, it is no longer necessary to make your hero heroic. The only necessity is that he must be the central figure and that he must have some sort of charm or interest as a personality.

The Difference Between Comedy and Tragedy

The difference between a tragedy and a comedy is that in a tragedy an otherwise noble character is placed in a situation where his possibly only weakness is made the test of his strength, and in a comedy a weak or foolish character is placed in a position that demands power which he is quite able to supply after a fashion by means of his egoism or what not. In either case it is a false position and a tangle is the inevitable result. I read a tragedy the other day in which the hero is so thoroughly weak and unpleasant that there can be no sympathy with him from the start to the finish, and the whole situation produces impatience and irritation rather than interest. The hero was too obviously a victim and your sympathies were too much worked upon.

If you are starting to write a tragedy or serious play, don't overdo the sympathy. People have just so much sympathy to spare and after that an appeal bores them. As an old man with a spendthrift son-in-law who had nearly broken him up, said to a friend, who was sympathizing with him: "Oh, Eddie, one gets *gallous*."

The one absolutely important thing is to make your chief character interesting, to have some sort of charm. To do this you must be interested in him yourself, you must find him fascinating. The one thing I would insist upon, the one thing I would preach—I don't believe in preaching about art but this one thing I have to preach first, last and all the time, is that you must be fascinated by your idea and your characters. If, when you get well started in your play, you find yourself lukewarm about it, give it up.

The comedy "Dulcy," which had so successful a run in New York, is an example of what I mean by the fascination of the central character. Dulcy is a young woman with an inordinate desire to help everybody, especially her husband, and fix things properly, and with a perfect genius for doing the wrong thing. She is like an engine which insists upon pulling the entire

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Stranger Than Fiction

In which it is shown that you can't *always tell all of it, and sometimes not the half of it.*

By JAMES KNAPP REEVE

It is an axiom that true stories do not often lend themselves to the purpose of the fiction writer. It has been explained more than once in these pages that an incident in real life may serve as the theme or motif for a fiction story, but it must undergo such changes as hardly to be recognizable. The trouble with most writers is that in attempting to use these little stories, they adopt the reporter's style of telling them as exact narratives, rather than by letting their imagination play around and develop the original thought.

In the September number of *Scribner's*, Mrs. W. K. Clifford, the author of "Miss Fingal," and "Love Letters of a Worldly Woman," has a story entitled "Thief." In a foreword she explains that the main incident is true.

I am not going to tell here what Mrs. Clifford's story is, as each one may read it for himself. But the incident upon which this is based was related to me some months ago as follows:

A lady in Philadelphia, wife of a well-known banker, was about to go to New York for a day's shopping. As she was leaving, her husband handed her a fifty dollar bill. This she thought she had placed in her bag, but in her hurry, left it on the table. On the way to New York she left her seat in the Pullman for a little time, her bag remaining there. Upon returning and opening the bag, she could not find the fifty-dollar bill.

Her suspicion centered upon a woman in the opposite section. Presently the latter went to the dressing room, and in her absence, the Philadelphia woman took the opportunity to search her bag, which she also had left upon the seat. In it she found a fifty-dollar bill, which she immediately transferred to her own possession, believing it the one which had been stolen from her. The other party apparently did not discover her loss, and both women left the train upon arriving in New York.

Upon her return home, the Philadelphia woman found her own fifty-dollar bill where she had left it upon her dresser.

When this story was told me, I immediately recognized its value for fictional use. Mrs. Clifford's tale so exactly follows the main incident, although wholly changed, in setting atmosphere, and characters, that there is no question but that its foundation was as above given.

* * *

I have been looking over current magazines recently and have found a good many things of interest to writers in addition to the story told above. In The Contributors' Club of the Atlantic is a quotation upon the introduction to a new work by a French writer: "I think I know how to sit down to look at life." There is a thought young writers may well consider. "Life is not written so that he who runs may read;" which emphasizes the thing which often has been stated, that new writers are too impatient, too much inclined to put pen to paper, before their subject matter has been well studied and digested. And this, too, suggests another thing which writers are sometimes inclined to doubt; that their own familiar environment, that the life everywhere about them, will furnish their best possible fictional material. The trouble is that they have not learned how to sit down and look at the life about them.

* * *

And here is a lesson from *The Saturday Evening Post*, which reads as though it might have been inspired by that wise editor, Mr. George Horace Lorimer. The story is "Home-Brew," by Grace Sartwell Mason. This begins with the young girl who is quite frank to express her own opinion of her family as available characters for the romance which she proposes to write:

"'Of course, they're all dears, my family,' says Alyse; 'but as fiction material, there is nothing to them; no drama, you

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The Writer's Digest

A Monthly Magazine for Writers of Photoplays, Short Stories, Poems, Popular Songs, Etc.

T. C. O'DONNELL - - - - - Editor

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Enter—The "Digest" Song Contest!

Read the announcement on page 6 of a Song Contest offered by THE WRITER'S DIGEST. As we study the correspondence that passes through our office, we are impressed with an idea that is widely prevalent, that no knowledge of technique is necessary in writing the popular song. We want to do what we can to dissipate this belief, and hope that this Contest will create an interest in a series of articles which we shall publish, beginning in our December issue, on "How to Write the Popular Song."

A New Market

When we announced our Radario Writing Contest, the first question asked us was as to the possibilities in the radario of a permanent market. It had been, of course, the first question which we asked ourselves when first we conceived the idea of the contest.

But—so fixed was our belief in the future of radio as a vehicle of entertainment, that we were absolutely confident that here in the radario, a brand new dramatic form especially written for radio broadcasting, was a medium that would "catch on." It was merely a matter of somebody getting the thing started and "plugging" it, as they say in Tin Pan Alley.

So immediate has been the response to our contest that the broadcasting station of the General Electric Company, as announced in our October issue, has announced a $500 cash prize for the best radio play submitted in their contest. And now comes the Crosley Manufacturing Company, of Cincinnati, owning Broadcasting Station WLW, and offers a monthly cash prize of twenty-five dollars for the best radario submitted during the month.

And the end is not yet. It is only a matter of a short time until all the broadcasting stations will be obliged, by reasons of competition, to adopt the use of the radario, which will assure to the radario writer a market as wide and as remunerative as any other form of writing.

We might add that all manuscripts should be addressed: Radario Contest Editor, Broadcasting Station WLW, Colerain Avenue and Alfred Street, Cincinnati, Ohio. Let's go!

The Radario Prize Winners

The winners of the three prizes offered by THE WRITER'S DIGEST in its Radario Writing Contest, which closed September 15th, are as follows:

First prize, Lillian Taft Maize, Portland Oregon—"What's the Use?"

Second prize, Frances D. Singler, Minneapolis, Minn.—"The Drum."

Third prize, Emily K. Boyd, Bakersfield, Cal.—"Tell a Woman."

Plans are now being made for broadcasting these plays over Broadcasting Station WLW. "What's the Use" will be given November 21st, between eight and nine o'clock, Central Time. Other dates will be announced later on, both in THE WRITER'S DIGEST and in the daily press through the medium of the regular WLW programs.

The Missouri Writers' Guild

It was our good fortune last month to be the guest of the Missouri Writers' Guild at their annual fall outing, described elsewhere by James W. Earp. It was a play time; "shop" was not taboo, but it was conspicuously scarce, being confined to those hours when, in a large semi-circle in front of a blazing log fire, the Guilders shot whole fusillades of questions at us—questions having to do with the practical businesses of marketing one's wares, establishing contacts with publishers and editors; author's rights;

preparation of manuscripts; prices—things like that.

The members who foregathered were fortunate in having present, not only the acting president of the Guild, J. Breckenridge Ellis, but also two former presidents, Louis Dodge and Hugh Grinstead. These veterans were a source of inspiration to the younger writers; it will be a long time before we shall hear anything so good again as "J. B.'s" drolleries in verse on any business which might be just then in hand; or the exquisite quality of Louis Dodge's lyric verses, read to us with deep feeling; or the gentle humor pervading the Grinsteadian conversation.

It is really a remarkable organization; any state body of writers that can achieve two important gatherings a year, as the Guild is doing, is remarkable in that fact alone. But the Guild is most remarkable in its membership; in the fact that its list of members contains as Missourians a large number of "big names" who have arrived, and whom one naturally assumes belong to New York or some other points East—and in the further fact that all of these take the keenest interest in the struggles of the very youngest and "un-arrived" member to succeed. Yes, we had a big week!

The Characters

Haven't you noticed, in reading the articles on characterization which we have published during the past three or four issues of the DIGEST, how insistent the writers are on the dominant importance of character interest as against plot interest? Plot interest is essential, but too often the beginning writer attempts to achieve it at the expense of characterization. For no series of incidents, no matter how skilfully they are marshaled into plot formation, can be made interesting unless they have to do with interesting people.

What we started out to do, however, was not an essay on characterization, but an introduction to the following paragraph written by Fannie Hurst, in *Arts and Decorations*:

"Does your character or your plot come first, is a mossy question which is frequently put to me. Invariably my character precedes plot—and plot after all, is merely, except in the detective or picturesque tale, a vehicle which must trundle along the idea. The plot grows around the character, who sits in the center like a spider weaving its own environment.

"But in the last analysis, methods are not what matter to the world, any more than it used to matter how many pairs of eyes went blind in weaving the queen's coronation robe. The glory of the fabric is the thing.

"The author's eyes, and how he uses them, are his own, his lonely and his eternal concern"—except possibly the editor's!

"Don't Talk—Produce!"

Which reminds us of an interview with Blasco Ibanez, in a recent issue of *The Westminster Gazette*. Ibanez informed the interviewer that "he hates the actual task of writing, to be 'nailed with his chest at a desk for ten hours a day! . . . Nevertheless, in his picturesque youth—a youth of prison, of duels, of life drunk to the full, of exile spent in wandering on foot over Italy, without a penny—Blasco Ibanez, after midnight, when he had finished his editorial duties in a dilapidated freezing palace in Valencia, would sit up till the small hours with a guttering candle to write his stories. The irresistible impulse to produce was there. The literary clique, the self-complacent coterie, he has always hated, and he invariably gives young writers the excellent advice not to talk and criticise, but to produce."

The WGY Radario Contest

Please don't forget the $500 prize radario contest which we mentioned last month, and which we are strong for, in spite of a typographical error which made us say that we hope our readers "will not write to WGY for a booklet giving full information concerning the contest," instead of expressing the hope that our readers would *now* write for the booklet. We repeat the address: Prize Competition WGY Broadcasting Station, General Electric Company, Schenectady, New York.

SLASHES AND PUFFS

By La TOUCHE HANCOCK

A little bit of instruction, a little bit of advice, a little bit of amusement, and a little stroll in the Garden of Memory, where bloom the flowers of experience, bitter and sweet—where the saddest words are not "Good Bye," but "Do You Remember?"

THE SECOND HUNDRED YEARS

A lady wrote to me recently saying that she might as well give up the game of writing because she had turned her thirty-fifth birthday. I answered that she was just beginning life in her literary work and to continue. Now, the theory that every one ought to be put out of the way after they have come to the age of forty years has long been exploded. These youthful geniuses, who appear from time to time rarely last. Besides, there are many people who really don't get a sensible idea in their heads till they are thirty, or a little over that age. Personally, I didn't do anything worth while, if I ever have done anything worth while at all, till I was thirty years old. Hundreds of men at all events have done their best work between the ages of fifty and seventy, and haven't even stopped there. I can write as well, or as badly, as ever I did at my age, and my age is—but I explained that little business last month. And mind this—if you give up, you give up. There is no mistake about it. A man, who retires, is done for. He had much better make a bluff at business going down to the office every day, if it is only for a couple of hours.

* * *

Sequentially in a way, an author never knows his best work. He will invariably pick on a manuscript, which he thinks is the best thing he ever wrote, when it is distinctly not so. If you send a manuscript to be revised, you may be perfectly certain that every one of your pet phrases will be cut out. I don't know why this is, but any "reader" will tell you it is a fact. A client of mine, by the way, "got the best" of me some time since. I implored her to write as she talked, though not quite so volubly—not to use "high falutin'" phrases. In short, to be absolutely natural. She answered my criticism by assuring me that that *was* the way she talked. She always used "high falutin'" language. Well, there was nothing more to be said, and, curious to relate, she was a Southern woman, too.

* * *

This is funny. A man sent me a manuscript to be criticized. I read it and criticized it favorably, saying I didn't see the slightest thing the matter with it. He then "kicked" because he had paid my fee for criticism. Well, that was the first time in my life, I had been abused, so to speak, for criticizing a manuscript favorably if I had dishonestly slaughtered his work, he would have been delighted. At all events there seems to be a certain amount of paradox in the incident.

* * *

And still another correspondent waits to be answered in this column. Again it is a lady, who sends me a manuscript, for criticism, and implores me not to be as sarcastic when I give my criticism as I am sometimes in "Slashes and Puffs." Now I protest. I am never sarcastic. One of the editors of the New York *Sun*, when I was writing for it in the "dear old days." told me that I was the greatest cynic in New York. I replied that that might be so, but contended that I was always kindly in my cynicism. This he allowed, and so I contend that no sarcasm ever appears in these pages, but merely a mild cynicism, when I laugh not at my object but with it, or rather him or her. I haven't time to be sarcastic.

So many "sucking poets" use so many unnecessary adjectives, probably just to fill out the line. This is all wrong. Words of power, phrases of elegance and virtue, have their place and use. Adjectives are not words of power, as a rule. A thing is better described by a statement of what it does than by an attribution to it of qualities. Speak in verbs rather than in adjectives. Use the adjective discriminately, and use it very sparingly. Examine the work of those writers, who move you, and you will find they write in words of motion —in verbs.

* * *

And just a little more philosophy. The greatest fallacy of all fallacies is the big name fallacy. If you have a big name, and a bad story, you disappoint the big expectations of your readers. A good story by an unknown man is infinitely preferable to a moderately good story by a well-known man. A big name certainly stands for achievement and ability to achieve. The most telling successes, however, have been with stories by unknown and anonymous writers. Don't for one instant run away with the idea that a writer with a name has every one of his manuscripts accepted. He doesn't. Homer sometimes nods, and any brain is apt to get muddy at times.

* * *

I have been asked—you may not believe me, but it is so—how one should sign a letter to an editor. Well, I know how I would like to sign a letter to some editors I know, but that is not the answer expected. I suppose "Yours sincerely" is ironical at times. "I have the honor to be your most obedient servant" is all right, but old-fashioned, and it may also contain irony, although not so deliberate as "Yours sincerely." In business letters "Yours truly" is quite proper, and "Yours etc." is non-commital. The simple "Yours" may be the supreme expression of devotion, or it may be rank impertinence. Why not "Yours hepatically"? The liver is thought by some to be the seat of affections. I think the most happy signature I have come across lately has been "Yours very kindly," for I had never met with it before, and it came from that beautiful state of New Hampshire.

Vice versa, the beginning of a letter is annoying now and then. Some people—music publishers and others—will insist on addressing me as "Dear friend," whereas I am, as a rule, no friend of theirs, and don't wish to be. The salutation is quakerish, and is as wobbly as that wonderful thing called a "New England conscience." There are some people, whom I would like to address as ""Unspeakable prig," but I don't for I believe there is a law of libel in this country, though it is rarely evident.

* * *

And lastly, I was referred to lately as "Dear old La Touche" in a column. Of course, the appelation was meant to be affectionate, but it might be taken in another way, so here is a table of ages, which is quite authentic, and may well be studied. Under 1 year, an infant; 1 to 3, a baby; 3 to 6, a child; 6 to 11, a boy; 11 to 15, a lad; 15 to 21, a youth; 21 to 40, a young man; 40 to 60, middle-aged; 60 to 70, elderly man; 70 to 80, old man; 80 to 90, aged man; 90 to 100, a patriarch; and beyond that, Methuselite.

ESCAPED

By Ida M. Thomas

Up on Fiction Mountain,
I sat me down to think,
Hoping I might find some thought
That would look well in ink.

In about a minute
A wonderful idea
Seized my mind. How well, indeed,
In writing 'twould appear.

Hastening quickly downward,
Where pencils could be had,
I madly rushed into my room
To get a paper pad.

All my hopes were blasted.
I was chagrined to find
While I was coming down the slope,
The thought had slipped my mind.

THE DAY'S WORK

AN OPEN FORUM FOR WRITER'S DIGEST READERS

Conducted By MALONE FARREL

In writing to the Forum, kindly address all letters to the Forum Editor, care THE WRITER'S DIGEST, *Butler Building, Cincinnati, Ohio. And remember, the Forum wants to hear from you on any subject of interest to writers.*

POETRY MARKETS

Dear Mr. Malone:

Those desiring a list of the publications devoted entirely to the poet's interests, will find the following of service:

Poetry, East Erie St., Chicago.

Contemporary Verse, Logan P. O., Philadelphia.

The Poet's Scroll, E. A. Towsend, Editor, Durant, Okla.

Voices, Harold Vinal, Editor, 110 Mt. Vernon St., Boston.

The Country Bard, C. A. Shap, Editor, Madison, N. J.

Rhythmus, Oscar Williams, Editor, New York City.

Broom, Los Angeles.

The Book of the Rhymer's Club, 527 Guardian Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio.

Palms, Idella Purnell, Editor, Galeana, 150, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

The Lyric West, 1139 West 27th St., Los Angeles, Calif.

A READER.

THE SCRIBES' CLUBS OF SPOKANE, WASH.

The Senior and Junior Scribes' Clubs of Spokane, Washington, are studying the short-story, versification, and incidentally the English language generally, believing that, if we are to preserve in its purity the language we profess to speak, it is more necessary now than ever before, for every one to watch his speech most carefully.

The Senior Scribes have been studying several years, and some of them have become successful sellers of their work. The Junior Scribes were organized the first of the present year; the members are business men and women who meet in the evening, and are very enthusiastic.

These Scribes believe that the commercializing of their writing, although very agreeable, is not the most important part of their results; that the mental discipline given them through their study, the cultivating of the ability to judge between good and poor work, and the fact that they are enabled better to enjoy literature of all kinds, makes the study very much worth while.

These clubs gave a "Get Together Dinner" Saturday evening, September 1st, in the Davenport Hotel, invited their friends and others interested in creative writing, and following the dinner gave a program of original work and music. More than fifty were present, and the affair was so successful that the members plan to make the dinner an annual occurrence.

ORPHA V. ROE, *President.*

YES—IT CAN BE DONE

Missouri is a land of wonders. Only those who live within her borders and explore her can know just how many wonders she has. But to the majority of those interested in things literary the most wonderful thing in Missouri is that organization known as the Missouri Writers' Guild.

These members—all real writers, if you please—get together twice each year for mutual help and inspiration, as well as for the transaction of prosaic business. The spring meeting is held at the University of Missouri. The fall outing is held at some delightful spot in the Ozarks, to which distinguished writers and guests in and out of the state are sometimes invited.

Imagine, if you can, thirty-five writers who can spend a week in one another's com-

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You will see the name of Mrs. Ethel Styles Middleton of Pitsburgh on the screen. Last year she clipped a coupon like the one on this page and through the creative test which that coupon brought her, satisfied herself that her *desire* to create screen drama was *backed up by natural ability*.

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The book will bring you a glimpse beyond the gates which separate the realm of motion pictures from the rest of the world. Through it you may look around and decide whether you wish to become a part of this facinating life.

Motion picture producers are suffering acutely from the need of new dramatic material. They ask, not for a celebrated name, not for literary skill, but for the fresh ideas of plot construction accurately prepared for visual expression.

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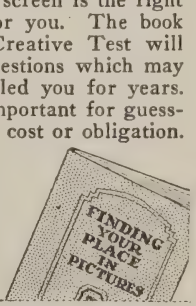

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pany and have such an enjoyable time that each year finds them coming back again. On these outings the days are spent as the individuals desire—but the evenings are given over to the Round Table talks. Sometimes these Round Table meetings take the form of moonlight picnics where we roast marshmallows, bake potatoes, fry hoe cakes, etc. At these Round Table meetings editors and writers tell how it is done, how it ought to be done, or how they do it.

Yes, they really do it! If you don't believe me ask Mr. O'Donnell. And not a bore in the bunch. A list of names of those attending would, nine times out of ten, read like a page from "Who's Who In America."

Remarkable? Not a bit of it. You don't know Missourians or Missouri. Jealousy is not in the lexicon of Missouri writers. Their belief is that if you have the stuff there is room for you at the top.

This year we spent at Roaring River. Wonderful caves, purest of waters, clearest of streams, finest of eats and accommodations. Here is a modern establishment tucked away in the very heart of the Ozarks, the nearest town eight miles away; and the nearest direct railroad communications fourteen miles. Here the rainbow trout—supposedly the gamest of all the game fishes, rising only to live bait or the lure—boldly swims up and eats chocolate cake from your hand.

But that ain't near all, as the comedian said. It would take a booklet to describe the beauties of Missouri, and a whole library of booklets to describe the writers of Missouri. If you don't believe it is possible to weld writers of a state together, come out and have a look at Missouri—the Show Me State.

JAMES W. EARP.

BONDS

DEAR MR. FARREL:

I am a subscriber of WRITER'S DIGEST, and note in the September issue it touches on "Sources of Paper Supply" for rough drafts and carbon copies. I have a discovery to offer to needy authors like myself that will keep them in paper until such times as they can afford to buy it.

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Here it is: Have your name placed on the Sucker Lists of the fake oil promoters of Texas, Arkansas, and California. They afford dozens of promoters to draw from. Postal card requests for their "literature" will start a never ending supply of paper to you, and of a very good quality. Last spring I expended seven cents thus, and so far have received a total by (actual count) of 162 letters, averaging four sheets to the letter. This makes 810 sheets so far.

I eventually expect to receive 1,500 or 2,000 sheets for my seven cents. These gentlemen are very prolific in hatching up oil schemes, and they never, never forget you once they get your name.

I have figured it out that twenty-five cents will provide paper enough for five years. Fifty cents ought to furnish the most ambitious writer with paper for life.

Try it and be convinced.

H. H. V.

SAY IT ABOUT APPLES

"National Apple Week" begins with Hallowe'en and embraces the first week in November. Canada, different parts of Europe, apple growing sections of South America and Australia are affiliated with the United States in the observance and celebration of this week. Newspapers should prove a profitable field for cultivation by writers informed on the subject of apples.

MRS. R. L. WEBB.

BROOKLYN HAS THE FLOOR

Dear Friend Farrel:

Pardon, please, the "dear friend" stuff, will ya? "Mr. Farrel" sounds so stiff and formal that I have strayed from the straight and narrow and started thus.

However, old scout, I just finished reading Scobell's letter from Montreal in the September DIGEST—you know, the one about organizing a Montreal writers' club. "It's a darn good idea," says I to myself, but also added, "Why let Montreal surpass Brooklyn." Surely there are enough people in Brooklyn who feel the *cacoethes scribendi* to get together every now and then to sort of mull over things for their general good, individually and collectively. The

value of such co-operation cannot be beaten, and should show its results in the production.

I'm for it strong. If you wish to start the ball rolling around this part of God's country, say the word, and I am yours to the finish. Do I hear my motion seconded, fellow writers and Brooklynites?

FREDERICK O. SCHUBERT.

P. S.—If my Latin is still as good as it never was, that *cacoethes scribendi* thing should mean, an itch for scribbling.—F. O. S.

(If we can be of service in bringing Brooklyn writers together, for mutual study and work, for inspiration—things like that which Brooklyn writers stand in need of, please write to Mr. Schubert, care of us. We will forward your letter, and he will then get in touch with you. —M. F.)

WHEN TO END IT

The following verse is the style which I think every writer should adopt. When the story is done, finish it.

Be concise and emphatic,
In all that you say;
But don't be erratic
For that's not the way.

But say what you say,
In an explicit way;
To be epigrammatic
Is a virtue, "They say."

I for one try to apply the above to all my work. I recently sold some articles, of an educational nature to "Caveat," 625 Locust St., St. Louis, Mo. They report promptly, and pay on publication.

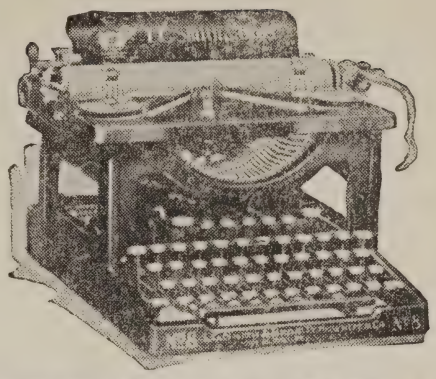
CLABORN CARNEY.

ABOUT OURSELVES

DEAR MR. FARREL:

I have derived so much benefit, so much inspiration from THE WRITER'S DIGEST, that I feel that every ambitious author should know of your magazine. It cannot be advertized too widely. For my part, I came to know of it purely by accident. I immediately snatched it up as a hungry man would snatch a warm cake.

(*Continued on page* 51)



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"A Century of Children's Books." By Florence V. Barry. $2.00 net. New York: George H. Doran Company.

Sidelights on American Literature

This is a book of estimates by one of our best known critics. The essays which make up the volume deal with O. Henry, H. Mencken, Jack London, Bryant, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Philip Freneau, now little more than a name, and Poe. The author has some valuable things in the volume—particularly in his essay on Freneau. At the same time one feels that he rather stepped out of the rôle of critic, in the spirit of which he has written some genuine contributions to the history of American literature (notably "The Development of the American Short Story," which we reviewed recently), in order to indulge in the uncritical business of consigning certain writers to oblivion for reasons, the reader feels, of personal bias rather than for reasons grounded in criticism—for any criticed reasons at least that he adduces. We may have a conviction that O. Henry and Jack London, for example, will be forgotten in another generation or two, but that conviction should be based upon something more critical than our belief that he ought to be forgotten on the basis of our own contemporary judgment. The next generation or two, and those which will succeed, are going to judge past performances more wisely than we of our generation do; they are going to consider any man who could command the attention of his generations from the standpoint of that generation. We ourselves agree with the author's remarks concerning Mencken; but we are not prepared to rule the polysyllabic H. L. out of court for all time just because he rouses the very devil in us.

"Sidelights on American Literature." By Fred Lewis Pattee, Professor of American Literature at Pennsylvania State College. $2.00. New York: The Century Company.

Now Will We Be Good?

If many more books like D. H. Lawrence's are inspired by attacks on English literature by Sinclair Lewis, Burton Rascoe and others of our Anglo- or near Anglophobes, we hope somebody will call off our writers. For Mr. Lawrence not only does a thorough job of psychoanalyzing our classics, like Benjamin Franklin, Cooper, Hawthorne, Whitman, *et al.,* but in the process gives even our American modernist group (the group that has delighted in psychosearching the souls of Mark Twain and Howells and other of our old-fashioned folk) the psychoanalysis of their young lives. It is a brilliant performance; make full allowance for a degree of animus back of it, and it still remains a most brilliant study of American literary backgrounds.

Picking up the Sinclair Lewis theme: "Listen to the States asserting: 'The hour has struck! Americans shall be American. The U. S. A. is now grown up artistically. It is time we ceased to hang on to the skirts of Europe. . . . . Alright, show us the homunculus of the new era. Go on, show us to him. Because all that is visible to the naked European eye, in America, is a sort of recreant European. We want to see this missing link of the next era. . . . There is a new feeling in the old American books, far more than there is in the modern American books, which are pretty empty of any feeling, and proud of it. There is a 'different' feeling in the old American classics. . . . The furthest frenzies of French modernism or futurism have not yet reached the pitch of extreme consciousness that Poe, Melville, Hawthorne, Whitman reached. The European moderns are all *trying* to be extreme. The great Americans I mention just were it."

We would like to quote further from this penetrating study. We would like to quote passages like that in which the author says that "Art speech is the only truth. An artist is usually a liar, but his art, if it be art, will tell you the truth of his day. And that is all that matters. . . . Never trust the artist. Trust the tale. The proper function of the critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it." . . . But space forbids—forbids our going into the merciless analysis of many of our gods—and especially those gods whom our own bright young intelligentisia hold up as the only things, outside of themselves and their own coteries, that justify their declaration of literary independence. These things we leave for the reader, who will spend several stimulating hours between its covers.

"Studies in Classic American Literature." By D. H. Lawrence. $3.00. New York: Thomas Seltzer.

The Short Story

This is a contribution of the first importance to the critical literature on the short story. It fills the enormous gap between the mere handbook on short story

(*Continued on page* 51)

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If you have a question for the Song Editor please observe the following rules:
Address all inquiries to The Song Editor, care The Writer's Digest, Butler Building, Cincinnati, Ohio.
All questions will be answered through these columns. Songs or manuscripts will not be returned unless a self-addressed stamped envelope is enclosed.
Send postage to cover reply and return of any manuscript.

A NEW KIND OF DEPRAVITY

We have received the following letter from the United States Music Chamber of Commerce, to whom it was sent by a woman who had fallen a victim to the snares of a song shark. Certainly this is moral degradation in its very lowest degree. That this shark is able to operate his scheme at all is a sad commentary on our laws, which permits these contemptible creatures to rob ignorant people of their hard-earned money, even coming in between a sick woman and a much needed operation, and yet which would send this same woman to prison were she to filch from this same wretch the price of a meal. The letter, with its pathetic spelling and all, just as it was written, follows:

"———, Ohio, Sept. 7, 1923.

"Dear Sir:

"Just received your letter this noon and so will now try to ancer it at once. But Pleas excuse Bad ritting & spelling as I never went to school & am now very sick so I can only rite a word or two at a time. Thank you for your inquire in to my song I rote. I rote the words & then I saw an ad in a magazine wher this man wanted song poams. So more for fun than anything else I sent him mine. But I thot it would Be coming Back in a few days with a little note stating it was no good that is if it came Back at all it might find the wast Basket. I did not at the time tell my Folks what I had don. What was my surprise a week later to get a letter stating my Poam was good & with a slite change or two in it & set to the Proper music would Bring me money & went on to say what all he would do. Make 50 Proffesnal Copyes 15 to come to me 15 to be sent to Publishing Houses & the rest to singers & to Piano Roll Cos. & Record Co's. & I was to have the Plates which were valued at $15.00 & for all this he asked the small some of $40.00 which was less than aney other Composers would ask. I rote Back to him telling him I was a young girl & poor. Was a Helpless Crippled Invalid. had not walked for 13 years, & a grate suffer. so that I must Be Kept under Hypodemices all the time night & day, and the Doctors all said all that would ever do me aney good was to Have a serous operation preformed By a spashlest who understood my cace & then 6 months in the

FOR A SHORT TIME. I will make the complete piano part to your poem for $6.00 (regular price $10.00). Send your poem and $3.00 and I will make the piano part, sending it to you. Then pay $1.00 per month for three months and it is your property. $5.00 with order pays in full. I GUARANTEE A FIRST CLASS PIANO PART OR REFUND CASH IN FULL. FREE MELODY to your poem on approval. Four revised, typewritten copies of your poem, with four melodies thereto $2.00. Formula reinking typewriter ribbons 25c.

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Hospitle, & now I was on days I was able to at all making Hand made Jewelry to rase the money for this operation & I did not see how I could rase the $40.00 & unless I could get anufe out of the song to help Pay for the Operation I could not do aney thing with it. Well he rote that he wanted to help me & that he would take the money in aney amount & at aney time I could send it untill I got the $40.00 all Payed. Well I sent $20.00 & told him to go ahead & do his Best with it as he knew whot it would mean to me. in less than three weeks it came Back set to music & if I did not like it he would reset the music or refund my money I had Payed him. Well I liked the music & so did all who heard it, onley the aftertime some one did not like that, so I sent it Back with the other $20.00 just before the 4th of July I received 20 copys & a list of Publishing Houses he was to send them to & he said he was not sending the plates untill he found out if I wanted Orcherstration or not. then he would send the plates & he onley asked $10.00 for the Orcherstration which was Half what all other Composers asked, & it would be a grate help to me in selling the song or getting some publishing House to take it up. But at the time I was to sick to even rite to him, & it was about two weeks or maby longer Befor I did rite, & then in a fue days my letter came back stating he had moved & left no address, so I thot he may have taken my plates & skiped with them intending to use them for himself. Make Copys & sell them, as the song was not Copyrighted he could do that, it says on the song tho that it was Copyrighted. You see I got rather supearhus & rote the Copyright Department to find out & they rote back saying that no song By that namb had Bin Copyrighted, he was to do all this for the $40.00. His namb and adress is Frank Padner, 6048 Prairie Ave. Chicago, Ill. I do feal alful to think I was counting on the song to help rase the money for my operation, I did not expect a forturn out of it But I did think I could get something & every little Bit helps. I have already had three Operations Byt not By aney onley our Home Docters. While I can never Be made

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A-8

well agen. But even Help is a hole lot if I can onley Be free of this alful Pain, I would think I was in Heaven, so you see what it all ment to me and I thot if this one was all right I could rite more. I have more rote But no music to them. I got a card from the Copyright Dept. so I could have it Copyrighted But I have Bin to sick to see to it. Besides my mother thinks I should wate untill we find out if we can make him do that as he has not filled his contract as he said he would. Which do you think Bist. I rote to a fue of the Publishing houses he was to send the song to But they say they dont know if a song by that namb came there or not, they looked But cannot find aney traces of it so I fear he did not do his part there ether. Well I do hope I have told you what you really wanted to Know. I do not think I will have Orcherstration untill I find out how the song sells would you. Thank you for your kindness & advice, & hope this long letter will help you."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

S. H. R., New Jersey—If you have a little capital to invest, and have plenty of time to "plug" it, you might be able to break even on publishing your own song. However, if you have tried all the reputable companies with it, you may take it as a pretty good sign that it lacks salable qualities. Also the time which you spend in plugging it could be more profitably spent in composing other songs and trying to sell them.

The prices that you mention are reasonable enough, provided you get good work. There are a lot of printers who cater to the cheap song trade, who use poor paper, old and worn type, giving the song an appearance that really defeats your purpose before you get started. I would suggest that you take a New York telephone directory and get in touch with several printers there, as almost all the big printing houses have facilities for printing music.

If you merely want to distribute to the general trade, your best plan is to interest as many dance orchestra leaders and motion picture orchestra leaders as possible in

your song; get them to playing it, giving them "professional" copies, of course; and back this publicity up with having the song placed on sale at the music stores. This is your best plan, but, no doubt, other stunts will occur to you which can be applied to local conditions peculiar to yours.

B. M., Pennsylvania—You say you hope we will not criticize your poem very harshly. Your song is so lacking in salable qualities, however, that we don't see how we can do anything else except be frank with you, because only in this way can we be of the most value to you.

Really, your song is very bad, and it is absolutely useless to try to dispose of it, because there is not a reliable company in the country who would want to take a chance with it. There are, of course, fake companies around who would take it on, but they would make you pay money in advance, and would give you nothing in return.

C. U. H., Missouri—You asked us to be frank, and I am going to be so when I tell you that I don't feel that your song is salable. Your theme lacks distinction, having been handled so often before. Also the idea which your theme carries is not striking enough to make it appeal to the publishers.

I am speaking now of the two stanzas. Your chorus is pleasingly done. If you could leave your chorus as it is and build up an entirely new stanza (only one) for it, I would feel rather differently about the song. Make your stanza contain just a single thought, instead of several as each stanza now contains. If you will do this and will send me your efforts, I will be very glad to criticize your song again.

G. C., Louisiana—Replying to your letter of August 27th, we are enclosing herewith a list of publishers to whom you may send your lyric. These represent reliable people. Above all I would like to urge you not to listen to the wiles of the song "sharks," who hold out alluring pictures of fame and wealth as the result of their exploitation of your song. All they want is your money; it is you that they are exploiting for their own benefit.

(*Continued on page* 44.)

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THE WRITER'S MARKET

All up-to-date and accurate information regarding suspended or discontinued publications, the needs of various publications and publishing houses as stated in communications from editors and announcements of prize contests in any way involving the literary profession will be found in this column.

Prize Contest for First Novels

A prize contest open to all writers resident in the United States who have never before had a novel published in book form is announced by Curtis Brown, Ltd., literary agents, 116 West 39th St., New York, to whom all inquiries should be addressed. Curtis Brown, Ltd., make the announcement on behalf of Dodd, Mead & Company, *Pictorial Review* and Famous Players-Laskey Corporation, the organizers of the contest, who offer a cash payment of $13,500, plus book royalties, for what is judged to be the story best suited for publication as a magazine serial, and as a book, and for motion picture adaptation. Manuscripts should be submitted before June 1, 1924, to Curtis Brown, Ltd. A decision will be reached by September 1, 1924. Worthy stories not winning the cash prize will be given consideration with a view to their acceptance on the usual terms of payment. Indeed, the organizers state that the competition would be a partial failure if at least a dozen good novels were not found which could be accepted on fair terms.

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THE PACKING HOUSE NEWS, P. O. Box 2711, Tampa, Florida, is announcing a prize contest offering as a total $1,200.00 in prizes. The contest is to find the best letter answering this question, "Why do you read *The Packing House News.*" The rules are as follows: Follow these instructions carefully in submitting letters: Typewrite or write your letter on a blank sheet of 8½ by 11 typewriter paper. Do not write or sign your name on your letter or give any indication of who the writer is. On a separate sheet of paper write your name and address and state whether or not you are on the mailing list of the *Packing House News,* and if not state whose copy you have read or where you obtain the *News.* Put this sheet with your name and address on in a blank envelope and seal it. Enclose this envelope with your letter to be entered in the contest. The sealed envelope will be numbered and the same number placed on your letter. The envelope will not be opened until after the judges have awarded the prizes.

"Letters entered in this contest must not be over 300 words in length. Typewrite them if possible and write on one side of paper only. Only one letter will be allowed from each contestant. If it is found after the letters have been judged that a winning contestant has submitted more than one letter, this contestant will be eliminated and another winner chosen. This contest will close at midnight of December 15, 1923. Letters mailed after this time will not be accepted."

$5,000.00 in prizes is offered by the Physical Culture Magazine. "We want the most interesting, helpful, and inspiring life stories of men and women who have regained their health and renewed their youth and their mental vigor through physical culture methods. Sit down now and tell your story.

"The editors of *Physical Cuture* will pass judgment on which stories are the most interesting and helpful. In case of a tie, full amount of the prize will be awarded to each tying contestant. The contest closes January 1, 1924. Address, Life Story Contest Editor, *Physical Culture* Magazine, Macfadden Bldg., 1926 Broadway, New York City."

THE DRAMA BRANCH of the Community Arts Association of Santa Barbara, California, is announcing a Prize Play Contest. Prizes will be awarded for the best original one-act and full length plays, the contest closing February 1, 1924. No play will be accepted which does not conform to the rules of the contest. Information as to details can be obtained upon application to Mrs.

O. L. Hathaway, 936 Santa Barbara Street, Santa Barbara, Cal.

The Editor of THE ROSICRUCIAN FELLOWSHIP offer three prizes for the three best articles submitted before January 1, 1924. First prize, $25.00; second, $15.00; third, $10.00. Articles may be submitted along any of the follow lines:

Occult Stories.
Personal Experiences in Spiritual Development.
Occult Philosophy—Any Technical Phase.
Occult Philosophy—Its Practical Application.
Astrology—Theoretical or Practical.
Number Vibration.
Health and the Means to Promote It.
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1. Articles submitted must contain not less than 2,500 words.

2. Articles which do not take prizes but which can be used in the magazine will be retained, *a year's subscription* being given for each.

3. Manuscripts submitted should be marked "Prize Competition" and number of words stated. Manuscripts should be typewritten if possible and in *double, not single,* spacing.

4. It is sometimes found necessary to make slight modifications in articles submitted to bring them within requirements. Articles are only accepted subject to this provision.

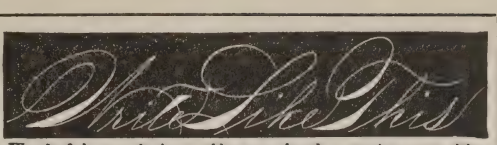
5. Any writer may submit more than one article if desired.

The S. N. L. Technical Syndicate, 822 Reaper Block, Chicago, "can use a large number of short high-grade articles, containing about 300 words, on Radio; also, a number of articles containing 750 to 1,000 words. What we require, are interesting descriptions of good hook-ups and Radio kinks. We can also use a limited number of manuscripts on Automobile Topics and popular science articles. Illustrations or photographs should accompany articles, if possible. We report on manuscripts within two weeks, and pay on acceptance at the rate of one cent per word, and for specially good material we will pay two cents per word."

The Laird Extension Institute, Minneapolis, Minn., is conducting a November "Finish-the-Plot" contest. Fifty dollars in cash prizes are offered. Any one may compete who is eighteen years or over and who asks for Free Book and particulars of Dr. Richard Burton's Course in Short-Story Writing and profit-sharing plan. The contest closes November 30. Ten prizes will be awarded: 1st, $25.00; 2nd, $10.00; 3rd, $5.00; 4th, $3.00; 5th, $2.00; 6th to 10th, $1.00 each. For more complete details and copy of the interesting little plot-skeleton written by Dr. Burton and to be finished in 100 words, see the advertisement in this issue announcing this contest by the Laird Extension Institute.

Leland Stanford Kemnitz, of Detroit, offers, through THE BOOKFELLOWS, a prize of one hundred dollars for the best sonnet or group of

(*Continued on page 46*)



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$20.00 In a few hours; $25.00 in an afternoon; $50.00 in an evening." Ever make money like that writing? I have. For twenty-five years I have been writing and selling and helping others to write and sell. If you will write me, I'll prove that you've been looking for me. I know that I can help you. I will accept a few MSS. for placing. Address:

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MRS. E. R. SNELL, 4210 Tuttle Ave., Dallas, Tex.

TRAINING IN FICTION WRITING

This announcement will interest writers and beginners who need help—who have the determination and the ability to qualify in the profession of story writing. For one of our modern educational needs has been a practical, red-blooded, university-grade of training school for fictionists.

Harry McGregor has proven himself to be a genius as a fiction critic and as a teacher of fiction writers. His ability is widely recognized among publishers and professional fictionists. A few of his practical results are attested by the following statements of authors:

"As I am one of your pupils, I know you will be pleased with the following telegram which I have just received: 'Your manuscript . . . . wins grand prize of $1,000, payable October 15 per rules of contest.'" "I have sold to Metropolitan Magazine my story . . . . which you criticized for me. Here's how!" "In March three of my stories appeared." "Just had a story accepted by Sunset." "Your criticism was worth $500 to me."

Writers and beginners who want Mr. McGregor's advice or his training work should first submit one or two short stories for examination. Only talented persons can be accepted for training. Training is given either by correspondence or personally to a necessarily limited number of writers. Consultation: by appointment only. Short story manuscripts to be examined may be sent now, without fee, for a prompt careful reading and a frank report.

Harry McGregor

Secretary Manager

6459 Hillegass Oakland, Calif.

THE SONGWRITER'S DEN

(*Continued from page* 41.)

C. F. F., Arkansas—We want to take up the questions which you raise in order.

First, if it is convenient for you to present the material in person there would be some advantage to be gained, inasmuch as personal contact very often creates a favorable impression, especially if the author is a good salesman. Under most conditions, however, one can accomplish as much through correspondence as through a personal call. In the case of a personal call an appointment is always desirable. If you live outside of the city where you are making the call, it is usually sufficient to make a telephone appointment after you arrive.

In mailing music, always send it flat, between mailing boards. A letter accompanying the manuscript will help its sale.

On your manuscript you can make a notation of your real name and address, in case you want to use a pen name for the composition. Business correspondence and checks would be sent to your right name and address accordingly.

No, there is no advantage to be gained in using a man's name.

Royalties rather vary with different publishers, but a quite common rate is two and a half or three cents.

A. C. C., Maryland—Replying to your letter, so far as the copyright is concerned it doesn't matter which set of words you use, just so they are the words that will actually appear in the published song. If I were you I wouldn't question the judgment of the arranger when it comes to changing your words. This happens in the case of all songs, no matter how experienced the authors are. I can't quite tell from your letter whether you signed this contract or not. If not, don't do so, as it is the old "shark" scheme, not even disguised. You have absolutely nothing to gain as the result of your forty dollars.

W. F. H., Washington—Don't, by any means, sign the contracts which were sent you. These people are out after your money, and nothing else. They haven't a thing to offer you in a way of service.

W. G., Maine—You have written a most interesting "poem." It is cleverly handled, but it is not a type of poem that will make a salable song. The idea lacks catchiness, and is a bit too heavy for the song buying public of today. Send it out to the magazines, for I feel sure you will have no difficulty in disposing of it for magazine publication.

G. A. W.—You will find a number of firms in your city who will be able to print music for you; all the larger printing establishments have the type for this work, and your best plan would be to call on say four or five of them and get their prices for whatever work you have in mind, and then select the lowest bidder.

The song which you submit has no salable qualities whatever. Acceptance by this firm means nothing whatever as to merit. They publish a whole lot worse lyrics than yours, and with music that is at least equally bad, and hand out to the author the same line that we have no doubt they handed to you. There is only one kind of acceptance that means anything as to merit, and that is an acceptance by a reputable, honest firm, which takes no fees in advance, and pay you honest-to-goodness money. Your lyric has nothing distinctive as to idea, and it is too sad, even for the melancholy inclined. Mothers don't inspire that kind of feeling—at least they *shouldn't,* in songs.

J. T. B., Tennessee—Your lyric is hardly of a nature that would make it popular with the public, or appeal to the publishers. The idea is an ancient one; it has been worked from every possible angle, and I can't conceive of any publishers taking a chance on your handling of it, which lacks distinction and interest—it lacks distinction I might add, not only in theme, but also in your handling.

L. G. M., Milwaukee—The proposition which you mention is the old army game. The firm which you received your first letter from merely sent your name on to a second firm, with whom they work in collusion, and from them you received this offer to set your lyric to music. It makes no difference whether one's lyric is worthless or whether is has merit, the procedure is always the same; they extol the lyric to the skies, knowing that a certain percentage of the people who write them are going to bite. I hope you will not be among the ninety-and-nine, which represents just about the average of those who do accept and get stung. Merely steer clear entirely of the outfit.

(*Continued on page* 48)

UNFINISHED STORY CONTEST!

$50 IN PRIZES GIVEN!

Dr. Burton

Easy to win if you use your imagination. Read this story plot and write your ending for it. Ten people will win cash prizes for their ideas. All contestants will receive free particulars of Dr. Richard Burton's Course in Short-Story Writing, and profit-sharing plan. Dr. Burton is "greatest authority of them all," and personally corrects and revises the lessons. Try your hand—you may have writing ability worth real money if it were properly trained.

PLOT SKELETON (by Dr. Burton): At a stag dinner party, a group of men were telling stories over the coffee. One, a well-known clergyman, the conversation falling on the subject of wedding fees, declares that the largest fee he ever received was $200. As the party breaks up, one of the guests, a parishioner whom he had married a year or two before, drew him aside and expressed surprise at the clergyman's statement. "Why so?" said the clergyman. "it was you I referred to, of course, but I didn't wish to give your name." "How could you mean me?" replied the parishioner in astonishment, "I gave you $1,000." And the two men stood looking at each other for a moment in dumb perplexity and amazement. Then—?

PRIZES for the best ending to this story: 1st Prize, $25.00 cash; 2nd, $10.00; 3rd, $5.00; 4th, $3.00; 5th, $2.00; 6th to 10th, $1.00 each.

RULES: Contestants must be over 18. Send one plot ending only on single sheet. Use 100 words or less. Don't copy this plot. Write name, age, address and number of words. Contest closes Nov. 30th. 1923. Put your wits to work on this story. Try for that $25.00 first prize—you may win it with only a few minutes' work. If you don't compete, ask for Free Book and profit-sharing plan anyway.

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THE WRITER'S MARKET

(*Continued from page* 43)

sonnets submitted before April 1, 1924. The judges will be John Erskine and William Griffith, of New York, former Professor of English Literature at Columbia University and President of the Poetry Society of America, and the latter, Editor of *Current Opinion*. There are no restrictions as to the number of poems that may be submitted by each contestant. The prize winning sonnet and such others as may, with the consent of the authors, be chosen for that purpose, will be published in book form in manner worthy of the contents. It is hoped to make this prize and plan of publication an annual event in order to encourage poetice effort and especially to discover and bring out worthy work that has not received deserved recognition. For conditions of the contest write to Flora Warren Seymour, Clerk, 4917 Blackstone Ave., Chicago.

SMILES, Culver City, Calif., is temporarily suspended.

AMERICAN ART STUDENT AND COMMERCIAL ARTIST, 21 Park Row, New York City. Editor, Walter W. Hubbard. Monthly; 25 cents a copy; $2.50 a year. "Only once in a while do we pay cash for really good articles—usually we pay in advertising space or life subscriptions. We can give young writers a lot of valuable publicity in our 10,000 circulation, and can use articles on cartooning, fine arts, ceramics, etc. We use photographs also."

AMERICAN ECONOMIST, 137 Centre St., New York City. Editors, The American Protective Tariff League. Issued weekly; 5 cents a copy; $2.00 a year. "The object of this league shall be to protect American labor by a tariff on imports, which shall adequately secure American industrial products against the competition of foreign labor. We pay on publication, one-half cent a word."

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL BOARD JOURNAL, 129 Michigan St., Milwaukee, Wis. Editors, William George Bruce and William C. Bruce. Issued monthly; $3.00 a year. "We are constantly in need of articles on problems related to city and village school administration, particularly such as are related to the financing of schools, school taxation and bonding, purchasing for schools, accounting, problems relating to the employment, supervision and of improvement of teachers in the service, teachers' salaries and pensions, planning the construction of school buildings, school sanitation and hygiene, heating and ventilating, etc." Manuscripts are reported on within a week, and payment of one-half cent a word is made on publication.

BRIEF STORIES, 805 Drexel Bldg., Philadelphia, Pa. Editor, Wm. H. Kofoed. Issued monthly; 20 cents a copy; $2.00 a year. "We are interested in short stories of a high quality, length from 1,500 to 5,000 words; novelettes of approximately 12,000 words; verse. No epigrams, jokes, prose fillers, photos or essays are used."

CHAS. S. CLARK COMPANY, 265 W. Thirty-sixth St., New York City. "We need Christmas sentiments, prose or verse, of a kindly but humorous nature. We report on manuscripts within one week, and pay 25 to 50 cents a line on acceptance."

FARM MECHANICS MAGAZINE, 1827 Prairie Avenue, Chicago, Ill. Editor, B. L. Johnson. Issued monthly; 20 cents a copy; $1.00 a year. "Illustrated articles on use of farm machinery, farm buildings and farm home mechanical equipment are used in *Farm Mechanics Magazine*. Also articles on Farm Management. We prefer illustrated 'experience' articles. Manuscripts are reported on at once, and payment of one cent a word or ten dollars a page is made on publication."

THE BETTER HEALTH MAGAZINE, Elmhurst, Ill., has been discontinued for an indefinite period.

AMERICAN BOTANIST, Joliet, Ill. Editor, Willard N. Clute. Issued quarterly; 40 cents a copy; $1.50 a year. "We are always glad to receive articles of new discoveries in plant life, but one must have a bent toward botany to have much chance of finding such, and if anybody knows anything new or informing about plants, this is the place to send it. Manuscripts are paid for only by subscriptions."

ARGOSY-ALL-STORY WEEKLY, 280 Broadway, New York City. Editor, Matthew White, Jr. Issued weekly; 10 cents a copy; $4.00 a year. "We buy serials of 60,000 words, novelettes of 15,000 to 20,000, short stories of 3,000 to 5,000 words, also poems of a topical but not newspaper type. We report on manuscripts in ten days, and pay on acceptance."

CANDID OPINION, Prescott, Ark. Editor, H. B. McKenzie. Issued monthly, 15 cents a copy; $1.50 a year. "We buy very little, but use occasional good short stories and authoritative articles on any question of industrial, political or social interest. We do not want stories about the war or serials."

CHEVROLET REVIEW, General Motors Bldg., Detroit, Mich. Editor, K. G. Cornell. Issued monthly; 50 cents a year. "We use articles similar to those appearing in *Motor*, and *Motor Life*. We would consider short stories in which an automobile plays an important part. We wish to improve the character of the *Chevrolet Review* in every respect, and beginning with December issue we are increasing to twenty pages and cover in two colors. Therefore we would be glad to have such high-class material from time to time which you think might interest us. We use poems and photographs if suitable to our publication. At present we would be glad to have material and photos suitable for Christmas number. Manuscripts are reported on at once, and payment is made on acceptance. For the material we have purchased so far we have paid one cent per word, but we are willing to pay the price if we can get good material."

THE PACKING HOUSE NEWS, Tampa, Florida. Managing editor, J. H. Reese. "We are always in the market for well written, illustrated feature articles. Most of these should

have some direct connection with the industry of packing or shipping fruits and vegetables. We will consider a few articles on canning and dehydration. News items regarding packing-houses and allied interests are welcome. We have correspondents in several states who send us news from their territory every month and we would prefer to have one correspondent in each state or country. Articles with illustrations get more attention than those without. Three or four good clear photos should accompany each feature article. A page of humor in each issue calls for a certain amount of material and we will be glad to consider original humorous material from writers. We would be glad to consider verses if they have a packing, shipping or business angle or fit in some way with our editorial matter. We are willing to pay well for good fiction either short stories or serials. Heretofore we have been unable to attract the kind of fiction material we want. It must appeal to men. Business stories, mystery stories, negro stories and red-blooded yarns of any kind will get our careful consideration. Commencing with November 1, 1923, we will have a fixed policy of paying for material upon acceptance. We will have a variable rate and this will be based entirely upon the quality of the material submitted. For feature articles our rate will be from one to four cents a word. For fiction, from one to ten cents. For verse and humor, depending upon the quality and value to us. For illustrations (photos) from 50 cents to $2.50 each."

COLLEGE HUMOR, 102 W. Chestnut St., Chicago, Ill., in the future will be very much in the market for articles dealing with undergraduate humor. "By that we do not mean a story containing fool stunts played by students on each other, or their professors. Much better would be an article on how John Jones was expelled from college for planning and carrying through a street parade whose humorous features were obnoxious to the authorities; and how Jones took the same idea into the business world and made a fortune in chain-restaurants by clever advertising; and, finally, how he established a restaurant in his old college town and had his grim joke by issuing engraved invitations to the faculty to sample his Excelo Chicken Broth—'Dandy for weak stomachs.' We place no restrictions on the contributor save that his material be original and be presented as briefly as possible. Such men as H. C. Witwer and Wallace Irwin write for us, but we really want to encourage the amateur. We are buying three-color front covers with snappy ideas (with a warm red as the predominant color), and sometimes we have a use for clear photographs. Don't send us anything without first obtaining the latest number of *College Humor* and studying our needs. Payment is made promptly on acceptance."

ACTION STORIES, 481 Eighth Avenue, New York City. Editor, J. B. Kelly. "We want 'Novelettes' of about 15,000 words, thick of plot, teeming with incident and full of color, romantic adventure, western, northern, sea and detective. No long stories, but 'baby', boiled-down novels. We are in immediate need of 1,500 word novelettes. The woman interest is invited. In return we will give prompt decisions, payment on

(*Continued on page* 50)

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A-6

THE SONG WRITER'S DEN

(*Continued from page 45*)

F. L., New Mexico—Replying to your letter of August 3rd, inasmuch as you did not give us the name of the company to whom you sent your lyric, it is difficult to say what chance you have of getting action on your work. Inasmuch as it is a company that requires advance fees, the chances are, so far as results are concerned, you will get nothing from them; even if they do come across with printed copies, you will get no tangible results as the result of your flier.

J. P., Pennsylvania—The concerns which you mention are both of the "shark" type which WRITER'S DIGEST is combating. They have absolutely nothing to offer you, and as you say, the fact that they want money in advance is enough to condemn them. You say $18 does not seem so high for publishing your song. It *is* high, though, when you consider that you get absolutely nothing in return for it; it is easy money for them when you remind yourself that they do nothing to earn it.

A. S., Mukwonago—Your lyric has considerable merit. It needs tying up a little in the chorus and the two stanzas. The general idea in the chorus is that your hero is happy and contented now that he is with his true love—but in both of the stanzas he seems to be nervous and wants to beat it somewhere with her. I would leave out that note—the idea that he wants to take her away and be alone, because it conflicts with the beautiful contentment which reigns throughout the chorus.

ONCE I DREAMED

BY MAUDE WOOD HENRY.

Once I dreamed of poetry,
Flowing lines in line;
Sonnet, odes and madrigals,
Epic things sublime;
Lyrics, ballads, roundelays,
Every sort of verse;
Now I'm writing greeting cards
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Lesson 6. Newspaper Correspondence.
Lesson 7. How to Prepare Copy.
Lesson 8. General Instructions.
Lesson 9. What to Avoid.
Lesson 10. Correspondence as a Bread Winner—the Trades.
Lesson 11. Where to Sell It.

Two Books Given Away--- See "B" Coupon

"How to Syndicate Manuscripts," By Felix J. Koch. In this book Mr. Koch tells you how to sell your newspaper articles to more than one paper—as many as you can get to use them. This is known as syndication," and means an immense increase in your earning power. This is not a book merely about syndicating, but about how to do it.

"The Writer's Question and Answer Book," by Harry V. Martin, author of "The Ideal Course in Short Story Writing," answers, in a simple, concise way, the thousand and one questions that bother the new writer—such as whether you should write to the editor when you send him a manuscript, etc. It will save you hours of looking through books and magazines for the answer to each question as it comes up.

"A" Coupon

WRITER'S DIGEST,
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Gentlemen: Please send me the IDEAL COURSE IN NEWS-WRITING AND CORRESPONDENCE, with Free Criticism Certificates, and enter my name on THE WRITER'S DIGEST list for one year. I will pay the postman $5 upon receipt of the Course, and I reserve the privilege of returning the Course at the end of five days if it is not all you claim it to be and receive my money back.

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is written especially for the man and woman who have not had previous experience or instruction in writing. It is written by an experienced newspaper man who is not only himself a writer of unusual ability, but has the rare faculty of telling what he has learned to the beginner. His Lesson on "What News Is" alone is worth the price asked for the Course — because "news" is the hardest thing that the student writer has to learn—the way it is usually taught. The Ideal Course, however, makes you see in just one Lesson what "News" is all about. And from then on the rest is easy.

TELL IT TO SELL IT!

Write it so you can sell it! That is the purpose of the Course, and that is why we have devoted a special section of the Course to a list of magazines and papers that pay well for the different kinds of writing that the Course tells you how to write. And that isn't all—through the Special 10-Day Service Offer which we describe below, you are kept in touch with the new markets each month by "The Writer's Market," published in THE WRITER'S DIGEST —which is sent you FREE.

We Criticise Your Manuscript---FREE

By a special arrangement which we have made with the author, he will criticise three of your articles before you send them out to the editors. In this way he can make constructive suggestions that will give **quality** and a **professional air** to your work. For this purpose each Course contains Free Criticism Certificates which you can use any time you choose.

OUR SPECIAL 10-DAY SERVICE OFFER

The regular price of THE IDEAL COURSE IN NEWS WRITING AND CORRESPONDENCE is $5. But to make the COURSE stand for the very last word in service we are making, for a strictly limited period of 30 days, the following amazing offer:

For the regular price of the Course, or $5, we will send you the Course—postage paid by us—and the Free Criticism Service—and THE WRITER'S DIGEST for one year—twelve big numbers filled with practical articles by men who have made good, and containing each month an up-to-date list of new markets. To get this remarkable bargain, just fill out the **"A" Coupon** and mail to us—TODAY. Don't even take the time to send the money. If you are already a subscriber to THE WRITER'S DIGEST, we will extend your subscription a year, or mail it to a friend if you desire. Or—

In place of THE WRITER'S DIGEST we will send you two important books for writers—"How to Syndicate Manuscripts," by Felix J. Koch, and "The Writer's Question and Answer Book," by Harry V. Martin. Both authors are men of recognized ability, Mr. Koch being the most prolific writer of syndicated feature material in the country, and Mr. Martin being author of "The Ideal Course in Short Story Writing." Both books will give you valuable information along the same lines as your Course. **To get the Course and the two books, use the "B" COUPON.**

"B" COUPON

WRITER'S DIGEST,
8 Butler Bldg., Cincinnati, Ohio.

Gentlemen: Please send me THE IDEAL COURSE IN NEWS WRITING AND CORRESPONDENCE, with Free Criticism Certificates, and the following books: "How to Syndicate Manuscripts" and "The Writer's Question and Answer Book." I am to pay the postman $5 upon receipt of the Course. It is understood that within five days I can return the Course and receive my money back if I am not satisfied in every way with the Course.

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THE WRITER'S MARKET

(*Continued from page* 47)

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THE DAY'S WORK

(*Continued from page* 35)

I want to add that if any aspiring author wants to know whether or not he has talent in this art, he needs only to question himself, "Is writing always foremost in my thoughts?" If it is, he is on the shining road to success. Every man who is successful in his undertakings (whether they be in the line of music, sport, or business), succeeds because that undertaking has been foremost in his mind. He may not have put it there; it may have been natural. But it is there, nevertheless.

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BUILDING UP A WORKING LIBRARY

(*Continued from page* 37)

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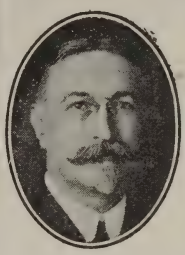

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STRANGER THAN FICTION

(*Continued from page* 25)

know, no color; just nice, ordinary, unimaginative dears. They're utterly unstimulative. That's why I can't live at home, and create. They don't understand it, poor dears; but what could I possibly find to write about at home'?"

And then the story begins to unfold. In every member of that commonplace, middle-class family, from which the girl can draw no inspiration, romance holds sway. There is the longing for expression in art, in the plain old-maid aunt. A longing for the far places, in the quiet, reserved brother. The determination to know life and love, in the fair little sister who seems yet a child. The memory of old days, with boyhood friendship renewed, and the joy of living, in the steady, prosaic, father. This furnishes still another illustration that stories lie all about us, if we have but the eye with which to vision them.

In all literature we may find endless examples of fiction material of the very first rank drawn from familiar environment—from the scenes and the people which have been known to the writer through a lifetime of association. Thus the writer who cannot go to the far places of the earth and search for inspiration amid the unusual or the bizarre, should take courage and seek closely among the things familiar for the subjects which will make his pages glow with life.

And while it remains true that Truth is Stranger than Fiction, it also is true that Truth, as I have said, will not always serve the purpose of the fictionist; yet in the lives of all men and women great drama exists, and might be found had we the Seeing Eye. Sometimes this drama comes to the surface, and in a future paper I shall give some actual accounts of drama in real life that may stimulate some writer to try how nearly he may equal these in the people of his mind and pen.

THE ABC OF PLAY WRITING

(*Continued from page* 24)

train and inevitably takes the wrong track. She is what used to be called a born fool. She gets her whole family and her friends into what appears to be an inextricable mess, and she does it again and again, but she is so apparently plausible, so nice, so sweet-tempered, so affectionate, and her intentions are so good, she has, that is to say, so much charm, that you like her and forgive her while you are sorry for any one who has to live with her. "Dulcy" is one of the best comedies ever written and it is so because the central figure, the heroine, Dulcy, is so actively idiotic, and yet so lovable.

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be slighted, and, for my part, I should rather see a good play acted by a fairly good stock company than see a one-man play acted by a star with an extremely thin support.

Do not slight your minor characters. It is the little things in life that often make one comfortable and contented and an audience may go home happy because they have been so thoroughly pleased by various characters in the play beside the hero or the heroine. Remember that your appeal is to human beings and that when they go to a play they like to see characters who are human and not impossible puppets. They enjoy seeing people in tight or dangerous or ludicrous situations, who are like themselves or like people they know. They go to see Booth Tarkington's "Seventeen," and they recognize Willy Baxter as the boy they have been or as the boy next door or as their own boy; and the father and mother as the father and mother of almost any household in a small town in Ohio or Indiana, and so on with the other characters. And they like the play.

Live with Your Characters

The creation of characters is, in my opinion, more important than the creation of plot. It may happen that it is the creation of plot—but I will come to that later. Shakespeare took most of his plots from history or from stories which had been told before, but Shakespeare's characters are his own. Just how a playwright makes his characters is a secret hardly even known to himself, but of one thing you may be sure: You must live with your characters and study them until they become as real to you as living people you know, until they become so real that they seem to do and say things of their own volition and not because you make them.

Think your characters out and then make them act and talk until they take on a personality all their own. You may at the beginning have in mind some real person for a prototype but soon, after your character has walked about your stage a bit—the stage of your mind—and talked a bit and you have imagined him in one situation

and another, he will become real to you and you will forget the prototype.

There are a few simple rules I would suggest in regard to the characters in a play.

In the first place, never put in any one who doesn't belong, that is who has not something to do with the plot. No matter how fascinating he may be, how funny when perhaps you need to add a spice of humor, or how much you may need him to explain the plot, or how much you may need another person or two, be ruthless and keep him out unless you can conscientiously weave him into the story as a necessary part of the plot.

Differentiate Your Characters

Try to differentiate your characters. If you have two young men, don't make them like the Siamese twins. Remember that people, usually, are different and you are making people, not dolls with faces all alike. Your characters must have the deftness and attraction of the hand-made. Thank goodness, a play is one thing that can never be turned out by machinery.

Whenever you think of something for a character to do or say, ask yourself: "Is this in keeping with his nature?" If you have a clever speech you want said, don't put it between the lips of a stupid person. Leave it out rather than give it to some one who wouldn't say it naturally. A monkey does clever tricks but an elephant doesn't.

Choosing differing kinds of characters and placing them in interesting juxtapositions to one another is like the composition of a picture. The lines of a picture are much like the plot of a play and the colors are like the characters. A bit of bright color in a picture brings the whole thing out and a bit of human nature here and there brings out the tone of your play.

Of course, in writing a play or in doing anything creative, for the matter of that, you are primarily doing it to please yourself. That is not selfish or egotistical, it is following a law of nature like that of eating and drinking. But don't forget your actors and your audience. We speak of an actor creating a part, but an actor can not create a part unless the dramatist gives him

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the material, the understanding of it. Give your actor something to go on and he will do fuller justice to your play. Make your character funny or stupid or pathetic or fatuous so that the actor can see your point and carry it out. And understand that you are interpreting life for your audience. You, the dramatist, are the eyes and the ears and understanding of the people who watch your play. If people in general found life as interesting as a play, they wouldn't go to see plays. It is because they themselves are not capable of seeing and doing in life all that you put into the play, that they enjoy the theatre.

In speaking of how one finds an idea for a play, I said that it was often in a character. I fancy that it is more often the case than that an idea or situation forms the nucleus of drama. I can not prove it but I am of the opinion that Hamlet and Lear and Macbeth themselves were the inspiration of Shakespeare's tragedies bearing those titles—the vacillating student, the gullable old man, the ambitious chieftain.

Writing so brief an article on characters in plays is very much like picking out a few words from a dictionary and handing them to you for a vocabulary. I apologise and sigh. The world is large, my children. The possibilities for plays are infinite.

One thing I must add: Go to see plays in theatres, study them, read them, read articles about them—like this one! This will all help you—somewhat. But above all, mingle with people, different sorts of people, different layers of society, and study them. "The proper study of mankind is man," as a little old sour funny poet said once.

THE PHOTOPLAY PLOT

(*Continued from page* 22)

this county want as mean a man as that for sheriff, why *you* resign!" Here is where character proves the unexpected in the story.

Later, after Donald, Sr., has arrived, a letter comes from "Sweetie" in which she admits placing "that there little spy glass" beside Marc's body. She is somewhere on the ocean, suggesting that suicide will end

her career. Bud triumphantly exclaims, "I knew he never done it!"

These strands fill out the story, with the addition of what has already been given in the October number. Space forbids going fully into detail, but enough has been given to show how to *work out* the story from the plot. I find here that I have the following complete cast of characters:

Donald Felton, Sr...Successful Man
Don, Jr.....His Son
Marc Carroll.....A Moonshiner
Bedo .....His Daughter
"Sweetie" Jones.....A Wild Woman
Bud Jemmerson.....Sheriff of Onion County
His Deputy.....
Sam Griggs.....Merchant
Pete McDade.....Driller
"Brother" Pryam....Evangelist and Reformer
Martin Bennett.....Oil-field Laborer
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Wild women, drilling crew, gamblers, oil men, citizens, and the like.

(*The third article in Mr. Dimick's series will appear in the December* DIGEST.)

THE TECHNIQUE OF VERSE WRITING

(*Continued from page* 17)

have a picture of the surroundings, a hint of all the loveliness the man is ready to leave. Oh, there is a great deal left out. Our first intention, to say it all in one stanza, we find, as we proceed, to be impossible. Making a beginning, we fumble a bit, writing several variants:

"Then he remembered all the other times
He had been greeted by that swift embrace."

"These things had startled him at other times:
Slim hands, a whisper——"

"He only knew that many other times
When he had plunged into that swift embrace,
A voice had seemed to whisper in his ears.
He heard it now: a chain of curious rhymes
Filled with dear promises."

"He knew; he knew! How many other times
Had he plunged in to meet that swift embrace,
That voice of welcome madness in his ears"——

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A-6

It is impossible to explain at length why all of these are bad or partly bad. The reader can study out these details for himself by remembering what has been said about the stanzas previously written. Suffice it to say that by picking the word or phrase we want from each false start, we evolve our stanza.

"Lone mornings there had been at other times
When he had plunged to meet that swift embrace;
But now a voice was whispering at his ears
Delicious madness chained to curious rhymes
Filled with dear promises. Away with fears!
Now he must tear the veil from off her face."

Now for our contrasting picture, showing the beauty of the world that is to be left behind. We write a stanza and revise it exactly in the same way; no new principles being involved, we will omit all the various stages of its progress.

We are now ready for the typewriter. As we type, however, we keep our critical attitude and make whatever word-changes appear desirable. Sometimes when we think we have finished a poem and start to type, we find we have just started, and must virtually rewrite the whole thing. We are spared that additional labor in this case. Here is the finished poem as we type it.

THE LAKE

He felt the water close on him like arms:
Cool arms, as passionately firm as tender;
And passing ripples leaped to kiss his cheek.
So like were they to lips that quaint alarms
Groped in his mind: what did the water seek
That, like a woman, it could feign surrender?
Lone mornings there had been at other times
When he had plunged to meet that swift embrace;
But now a voice was whispering at his ears
Delicious madness chained to curious rhymes
Filled with dear promises. Away with fears!
Now he must tear the veil from off her face.

The still pines waited on the other shore
Pink-tipped with sunrise, faintly came the call
Of farmers driving heavy teams afield,
A blackbird fluted; but he turned from all
These things which he had loved, for even more
He loved the shadowy lake, and now would yield.

As he swam out, he saw the yellow sands
Recede below into a mist of green
Where fish with red eyes were, and then
were not.
He saw brown weeds reach up like drowned
men's hands. . .
Had the lake loved these men—and then
forgot,
And hidden them beneath a flowered screen?

Should he so lie one day? He did not care,
For lips were at his lips, eyes at his eyes,
White arms around him and two white
breasts under,
And like a garment was her floating hair;
So that he drifted down in the great wonder
Of one ecstatic moment of surprise.

So much for this particular poem. A few general remarks in addition.

How can one write in meter, and be sure his lines will "come out right?" Simply by trial and selection. If *beautiful,* with its three syllables, will not fit, try *lovely* with two. If you find that

"Nuns do no fret at their narrow convent
walls"

spoils the meter, rearrange it to read,

"Nuns fret not at their narrow convent
walls."

The line is a bad one, though a great poet wrote it; none the less, it will serve to illustrate. Above all things, never content yourself with trite or meaningless words that seem necessary to fill out the line or turn the rhyme. If you do, you are defacing the temple it is your business to decorate. If the struggle with intractable words be a hard one at first, keep on working away. In time, writing in meter will become instinctive.

To the young writer, I would say, steer away from the moral in the last line or stanza. Let your poem speak for itself; let the reader draw conclusions; preach no sermons, but stick to your trade of singing. If you happen to be a great prophet, you may disregard this advice with impunity. Isaiah did it in almost every chapter. Otherwise, do not tack on morals, and if you find they have crept in, write them out again. I am not talking about morality versus immorality. Oscar Wilde said: "There is no such thing as a good book or a bad book. Books are well or badly written; that is all."

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On the question of revision, much might be said. Polish your work, but do not polish the life out of it. Gray is said to have spent seven years on the writing and revising of his "Elegy," a highly finished work of art. Perhaps some work is too highly finished.

Though in general one should suggest rather than say, he should suggest definite things. Vagueness is almost invariably bad. Usually, the definite is superior to the indefinite, the specific to the general, the concrete to the abstract. These precepts, however, are not peculiarly the chattel of poets, but of all writers who do more than scribble.

CORRESPONDING FOR TRADE JOURNALS

(*Continued from page* 11)

Acting as correspondent for a dozen trade papers will not keep an energetic writer busy, for most trade papers are published monthly, some are published weekly and a few are semi-monthly publications. By consulting "The Writer's Market" in THE WRITER'S DIGEST every month, the trade paper contributor can establish profitable connections with new outlets for his work, and in order to succeed in this field of writing one must be constantly on the alert for new ways and means of selling the information he gathers on his daily rounds.

How to Write It

Writing news for trade journals is similar to writing news for newspapers. This renders trade correspondence particularly easy for newspaper men, and at the same time renders its mastery easier than many other forms of writing for the beginner.

For instance, a trade journal contributor learns that one large women's wear establishment has purchased the business of another concern engaged in the same field of merchandising. After securing reliable information concerning the deal from officials of one or both of the concerns interested, the trade journal contributor would write his story somewhat after this fashion:

"The Brooks Company, Cleveland, Ohio, has purchased for $8,000,000 the business of A. Hamburger & Sons Company, Los

Angeles, California, according to Aaron Holtz, general merchandise manager of the Cleveland store."

It will be noted that the correspondent is not taking upon himself the responsibility of announcing this sale. He shows that he secured his information from competent authority, the Cleveland merchandise manager. Trade journals insist upon accuracy in the news they publish and correspondents should send out nothing that has not been verified. By using the phrase, "according to Aaron Holts," the correspondent shows the trade journal editor that this story has come from a reliable source.

Where it is possible to quote someone in authority, the correspondent should do so. It may obviate the possibility of embarrassing complications after the news is published.

To continue with the above specimen news story:

"The acquisition of this store is one of several deals which have been under consideration for some time," said Mr. Holts. "It is the first direct step in an expansion movement we have planned. The stores of the Brooks chain in Cleveland, Akron, Denver and St. Louis, will profit by this deal because of the increased purchasing power and the augmented net earnings that will become possible."

How Many of the Facts?

This news story might describe the Los Angeles store just purchased, giving the value of its holdings, the excellence of its location, the number of its employes and a brief resume of its history. An $8,000,000 deal is worth considerable space in a trade journal devoted to the interests of women's wear dealers. The correspondent's aim should be to furnish his trade journal with a complete story; the editor will publish all that is wanted. It is much better to send out a story containing too many facts than one which contains so few that the editor is compelled to ask for more.

The retirement of a prominent manufacturer in the women's wear field might be treated thus:

"A. E. Lefcourt, of A. E. Lefcourt & Company, New York, manufacturer of

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Care Writer's Digest, Cincinnati

coats and suits, has retired from the trade after many years of active effort, to devote his time exclusively to his large realty holdings.

"The business is being liquidated.

"Mr. Lefcourt has engaged in realty transactions since 1910, and has large holdings to occupy his attention now."

Personal news about women's wear merchants is always in demand among trade journals catering to that branch of business. Every correspondent sooner or later will find himself called upon to write a personal news item such as:

"Charles M. Walker, president of the Charles Monson Company's department store, New Haven, Conn, has been elected for a second term as head of the New Haven Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Walker has been a member of the directorate board of this group for many years."

From these examples it will be noted that a news story for a trade journal is similar to a newspaper story, in that it goes right to the root of matters without any quibbling. A good rule to remember is: Tell it all in the first paragraph, unless your story requires more than one paragraph. The style of the trade journals to which you are contributing necessarily must govern the manner in which you treat news, but it usually is a safe assumption that brevity will please the editor The importance of the news must determine the amount of space to be given to a story, but the average correspondent finds that his stories usually can be written in much the same fashion as the average newspaper story—the meat in the first paragraph or two. The reader will understand what has occurred, even though two-thirds of the story did not appear in print.

To the average business man his trade journal is valuable only so long as it contains accurate facts; when an error occurs, he is liable to write to the editor, and if your article contained the error your connection with the trade paper may be terminated abruptly.

Having decided to do trade paper work, the writer should endeavor to handle correspondence for the trade papers nearest him For instance, a writer living in a

southern state would probably find it most profitable to act as correspondent for trade papers in that section of the country. Activities in the southern states probably are of more interest to southern trade papers than are activities in the North, East or West.

Addresses of trade papers can be secured by consulting any good newspaper directory, or by obtaining any one of a number of books dealing with markets for manuscripts. WRITER'S DIGEST maintains a department in which are listed many excellent markets for trade paper material, and every writer entering trade paper work should train himself to be ever on the *qui vive* for new markets for his material.

Of course, there are trade journals that print lengthy news stories of important events in the industries represented, and the correspondent must study the papers for which he is working. Otherwise he might render unsatisfactory service and overlook opportunities to make his monthly checks larger.

Trade journals frequently send out to their correspondents instructions regarding the preparation of stories. Careful study of these instructions and frequent examination of the trade journals themselves will enable the correspondent to write his "stuff" in the style demanded by the editors whom he serves.

Mailing the Contributions

Editors also notify their correspondents regarding the mailing of contributions. Trade journals published on the first of the month often require contributions to reach their offices not later than the fifteenth of the preceding month. Trade journals published weekly, of course, provide the correspondent with a better opportunity to "pile up" a long string of contributions, and where it is possible to do so the correspondent should establish connections with weekly trade papers. Papers published weekly also have established dates for their correspondents to mail their contributions, and these dates should always be borne in mind. A card index system is used by many correspondents in order that they may mail their copy at the proper time.

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State of Ohio, County of Hamilton, ss.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared T. C. O'Donnell, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Editor of the WRITER'S DIGEST and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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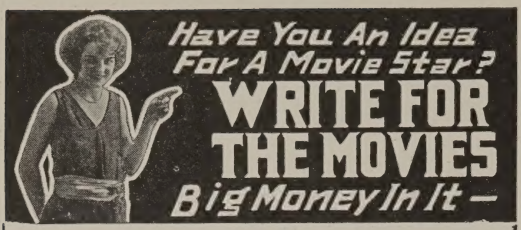
[Seal] (My Commission expires Dec. 27, 1924.)



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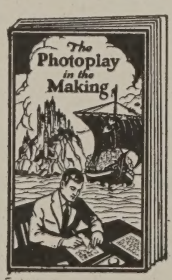

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In conclusion, it should be emphasized, perhaps, that the average trade paper correspondent will never amass a fortune. By studying the needs of the trade papers with which he becomes acquainted, however, an energetic man or woman may develop into a trade paper contributor of ability. By constant study of the field, the correspondent may learn to write more pretentious copy, such as business articles commanding a much higher price than news correspondence. There are dozens of men and women in the country now earning attractive incomes through contributing to trade journals.

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HISTORY OF A MANUSCRIPT

(*Continued from page* 8)

such good effect that my friends all tried to borrow the book, and one old settler even bought a copy! From three personal friends, who saw it with their own eyes, I am informed that the photoplay was produced at Nome, Alaska, Hongkong, China, and at Y. M. C. A. huts in France during the world war.

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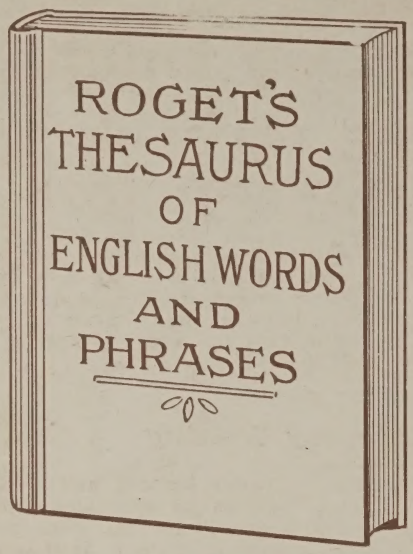

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that in our story we write, "His meaning was clear. . ." We stop. The word "clear" is not just the word we want to use. We open our Thesaurus and turn to the word "clear." There we find "intelligible, lucid, explicit, expressive, significant, distinct, precise, definite, well-defined, perspicuous, transpicuous, plain, obvious, manifest, palpable, striking, glaring, transparent, above - board, unshaded, recognizable, unambiguous, unequivocal, unmistakable, legible, open, positive, unconfused, graphic." See what a field of expression we have at our command. The synonyms of every word and expression are given in this manner.

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